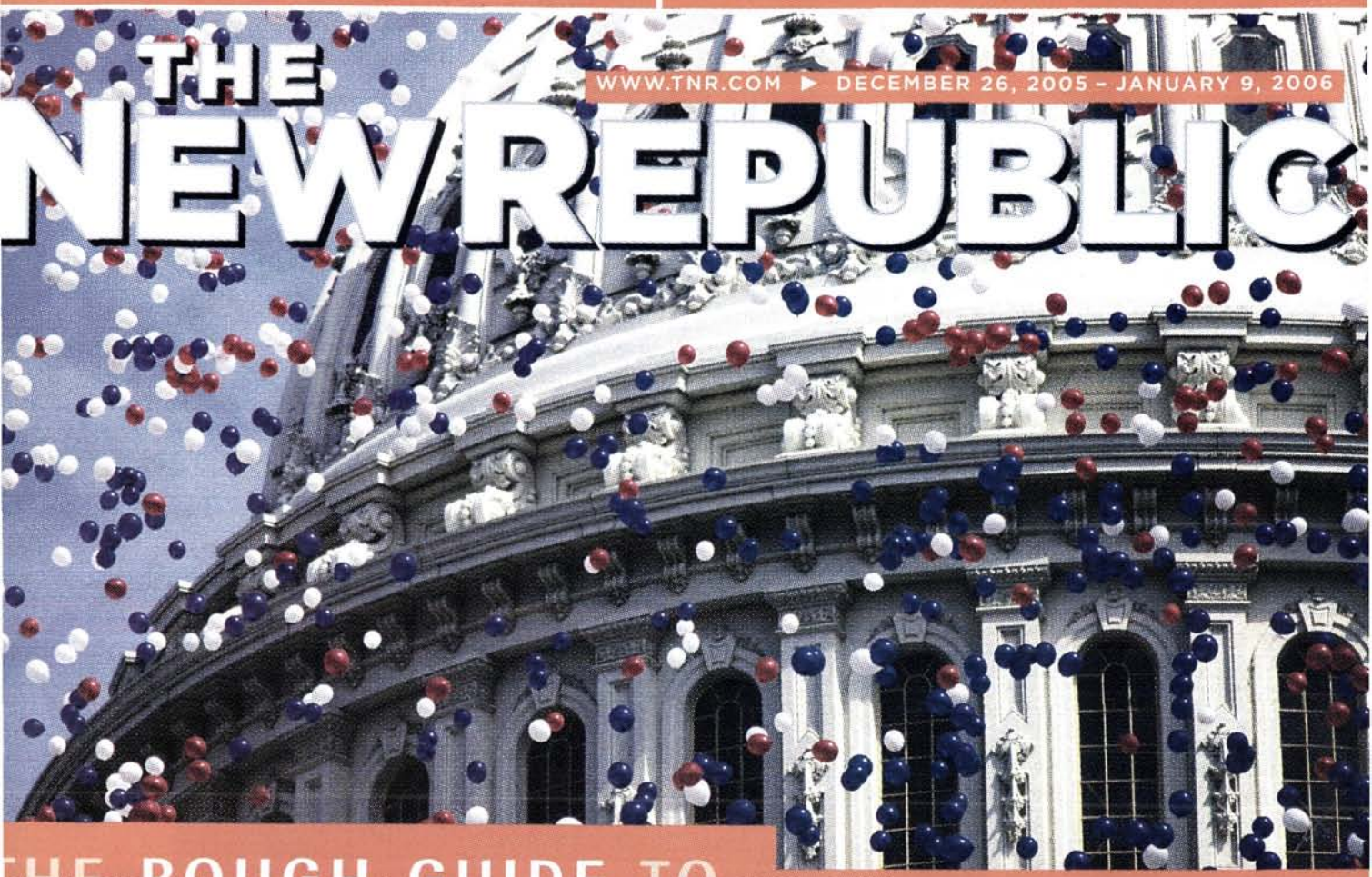
THE PASSION ACCORDING TO C.S. LEWIS
RICHARD JENKYNS

DEMOCRATS AT WAR
MICHAEL CROWLEY

THE NEW REPUBLIC
WWW.TNR.COM ▶ DECEMBER 26, 2005 - JANUARY 9, 2006



THE ROUGH GUIDE TO

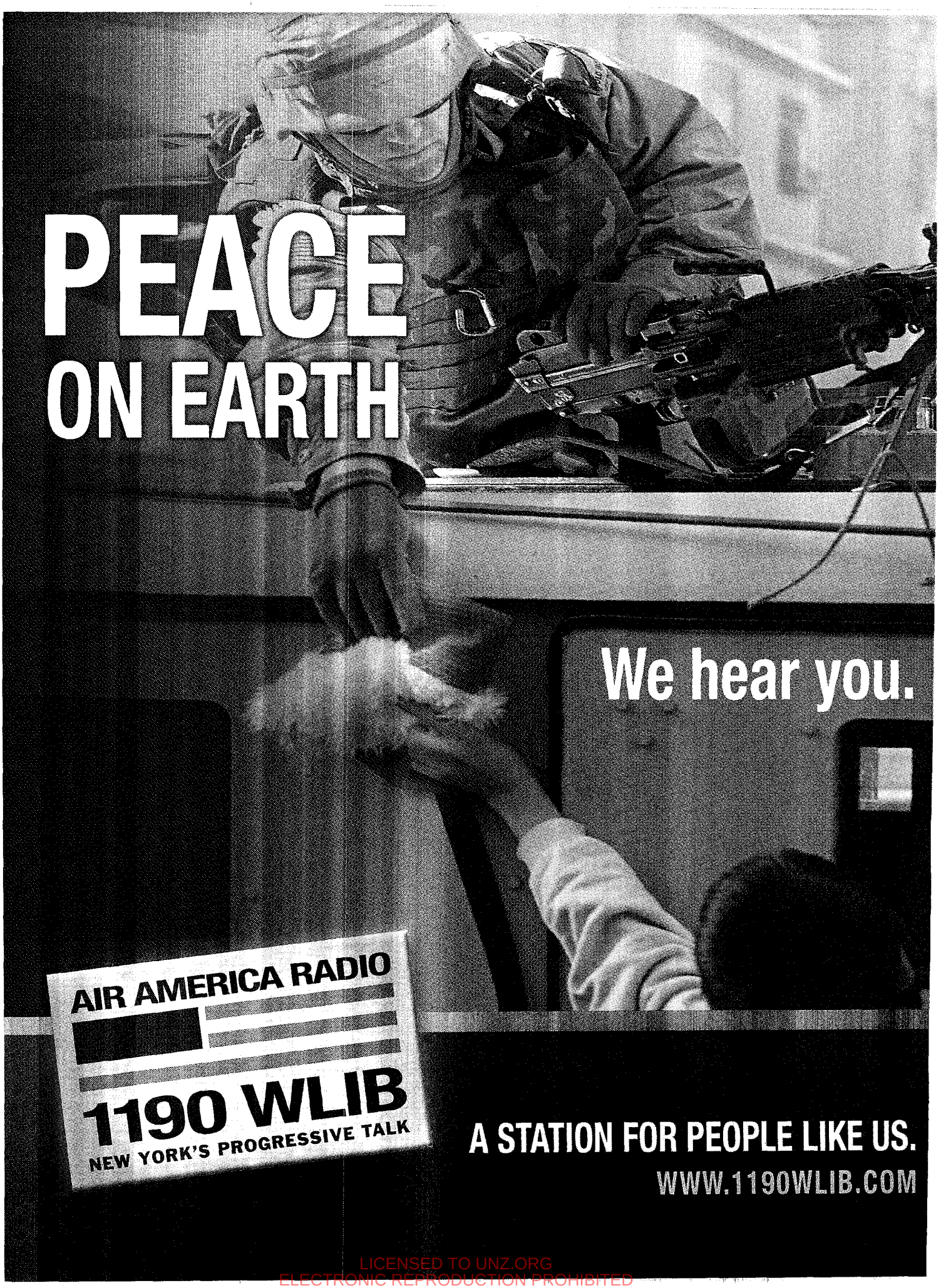
GOP D.C.

Over in Washington, D.C., there are some people who talk not about scandal. With the pictures in this so-called Rough Guide, the American people can finally understand what all the chatter is about." *George W. Bush*

#BXNRTKG **********AUTO** 5-DIGIT 94301
#90701000005544 22# 0544 13MAR07
RON K UNZ
371
555 BRYANT ST
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704 804B5

$3.95US $4.95CAN
52
0 71486 01744 4

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
MARTIN PERETZ

EDITOR Peter Beinart
LITERARY EDITOR Leon Wieseltier
EXECUTIVE EDITOR J. Peter Scoblic
MANAGING EDITOR Jeremy Kahn
DEPUTY EDITOR Katherine Marsh
SENIOR EDITORS
Jonathan Chait, Jonathan Cohn, Michelle Cottle, Michael Crowley, Franklin Foer, Ruth Franklin, John B. Judis, Lawrence F. Kaplan, Ryan Lizza, Noam Scheiber, Andrew Sullivan, James Wood, Jason Zengerle
LEGAL AFFAIRS Jeffrey Rosen
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR
Adam B. Kushner
TNR ONLINE
Richard Just, Editor
Christiane Culhane, Culture Editor
FILMS Stanley Kauffmann
THEATER Robert Brustein
ART Jed Perl
MUSIC David Hajdu
DANCE Jennifer Homans
TELEVISION Lee Siegel
POETRY EDITOR Glyn Maxwell
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT Joshua Kurlantzick
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Fouad Ajami, David A. Bell, Paul Berman, Gregg Easterbrook, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Nathan Glazer, Anthony Grafton, David Grann, Robert Kagan, Michael Kinsley, Charles Krauthammer, Jeremy McCarter, John McWhorter, Sherwin B. Nuland, Michael B. Oren, Christopher Orr, David Rieff, Maggie Scarf, Ronald Steel, Cass R. Sunstein, Alan Taylor, E.V. Thaw, Helen Vendler, Michael Walzer, Sean Wilentz, Alan Wolfe, Robert Wright
CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS
Jack Coughlin, David Cowles, Vint Lawrence, David Schorr
FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS
Massoud Ansari, Masha Gessen, Yossi Klein Halevi, Janine Zacharia
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Spencer Ackerman
ART/DESIGN DIRECTION
Joe Heroun, Christine Car/H2C Media
EDITORIAL-CORPORATE COORDINATOR
Linda Gerth
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR AND INFORMATION-TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR
Bruce Steinke
PRODUCTION MANAGER
Henry Riggs
ASSISTANT EDITORS
Kara Baskin, Marisa Katz, Clay Risen
ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR
Steven Groopman
ASSISTANT TO THE LITERARY EDITOR
Chloë Schama
ASSISTANT POETRY EDITOR Melanie Rehak
REPORTER-RESEARCHERS
Rob Anderson, Alexander M. Belenky, Eve Fairbanks, Keelin McDonell

GENERAL MANAGER Allen Chin
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Lori Fleishman Dorr
ONLINE BUSINESS DIRECTOR Ari Gersen
ONLINE MARKETING MANAGER Emilie Harkin
BUSINESS ASSISTANT Marjorie Powers

ADVERTISING SALES & MARKETING
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER Richard Parker
DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING, WEST
Joan Stapleton Tooley
ACCOUNT DIRECTOR Julie Sturmak Kettell
PUBLISHING REPRESENTATIVE
Perry Janoski, Allston-Cherry, Ltd.
MARKETING MANAGER Alexandra Scott

TNR/ON SYMPOSIA ON PUBLIC POLICY
Joan Daly

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION
ACCOUNTING MANAGER Jessie Ahn
ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT Vanessa Wilson
BUSINESS ASSISTANT Grant Loomis

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ROGER HERTOG, Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ
MICHAEL STEINHARDT

THE NEW REPUBLIC
Updated daily. On the Web at www.tnr.com.

THE NEW REPUBLIC
A JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND THE ARTS

DECEMBER 26, 2005 — JANUARY 9, 2006 WASHINGTON, D.C. ISSUES 4,745-4,747 VOLUME 233

Cover Story

SPECIAL SECTION **12 THE NEW REPUBLIC'S Rough Guide to GOP D.C.:** Experience the city like a native with this comprehensive guide to today's Republican-controlled, scandal-plagued Washington. Find tips only the insiders know: when to go, where to stay, what to do if you're indicted. Complete with map and walking tour.

Politics & the World

4 CORRESPONDENCE Does the "bureaucracy" work? &c.

Franklin Foer **6 TRB | Bad News** By trashing the "mainstream media," liberal bloggers are only hurting themselves.

The Editors **7 House Rules** A proposal that might actually clean up Congress.

Michael Crowley **8 On the Hill: Tug of War** The Democratic divide over the Iraq war isn't just political—it's personal.

Tamara Chalabi **10 Baghdad Dispatch: Court Side** Saddam Hussein's trial is thin justice.

Alec Appelbaum **38 NEW YORK DIARIST | Street Fair**

Books & the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann **22 FILMS | Altered States** Gimmicks aside, *Transamerica* is emotionally affecting; the lush *Breakfast on Pluto* feeds a fantasy world.

David Hajdu **23 MUSIC | McCartney III** Paul McCartney's latest attempt to discover his creative identity has less fluff than usual, but the one-man-band trick is wearing thin.

James Wood **25 God's Dictionary** *Melville: His World and Work* by Andrew Delbanco

Richard Jenkyns **29 The Faerie King** *The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C. S. Lewis* by Alan Jacobs

Stacie Cassarino **32 POEM** | *Early Snow*

Nathan Glazer **34 Late Admissions** *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton* by Jerome Karabel

COVER PHOTO BY *Joseph Sohm/Visions of America/Corbis;* INSETS BY *AFP/Getty Images (DeLay); Larry Downing/Reuters/Newscom (Libby)*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

FAULTY PROPOSITIONS

RATHER A LOT OF SPACE WAS DEvoted to the stardom of Arnold Schwarzenegger at the expense of the content of his deplorable initiatives ("Boxed Office," October 31). Our governor's idea of reform is to play the demagogue leader, the "terminator." Instead of working with constituencies in a democratic fashion, he has tried to blame teachers and a tenure law for state mismanagement of schools (Proposition 74), restrict union political activities (Proposition 75), grab power to cut education funding (Proposition 76), and move legislative authority over redistricting to a panel of three retired judges (Proposition 77). In terms of stardom, our governor is like our last celebrity governor, Ronald Reagan, and all too similar in political philosophy.

ED MCFADD
Encinitas, California

THROW THE BOOK

JEFFREY ROSEN'S LAMENT—THAT only perjury, obstruction of justice, and false-statement charges were issued; that Valerie Plame's classified status may have been iffy; and that crafting a federal shield law is problematic—fails to acknowledge that lying under oath is a crime that goes to the heart of our legal system ("Overcharged," November 14). Scooter Libby wasn't arguing with any umpire's call; he was trying to avoid being hit with the primary charge, probably because he couldn't be sure he hadn't committed that extremely serious crime. Or, less selfishly, he might have been trying to keep the administration's tricksterism from the light of day. Regardless of his motive, if he is guilty, Libby brought a self-serving agenda into the people's sacred court, crossed his fingers behind his back as he swore to be truthful, and then lied to Americans about how the White House conducts business. We deserve better.

MIKE ALEXANDER
Palo Alto, California

ROSEN'S STATEMENT THAT "THE Fitzgerald investigation ... may do long-lasting damage to political discourse in Washington" is like saying that the weight of the deck chairs may have done long-lasting damage to the buoyancy of the *Titanic*. The political discourse in Washington has already foundered, and it was precipitated by the only four political agents that matter: the House, the Senate, the president, and an electorate too blind, too ignorant, or too apathetic to notice the damage done by the other three.

M. ADRIAN MATTOCKS
Charlotte, North Carolina

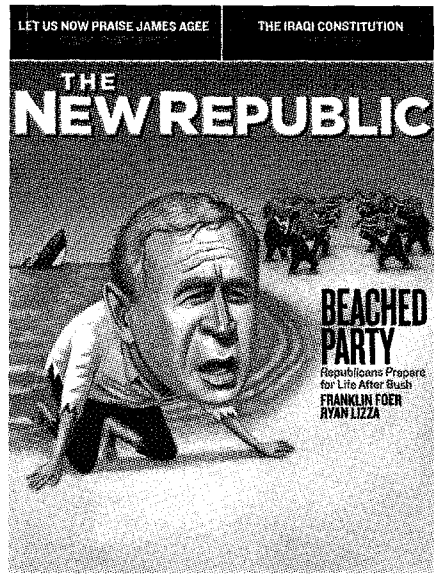
EYEWITNESS NEWS

JOSHUA HAMMER'S DIARIST IS NO more than an amalgamation of rumor; unsubstantiated figures (for his information, the number of murders in Detroit—385 in 2004, according to the latest FBI report—is not comparable to that in Cape Town); and, most disturbingly, personal experience—a new and fast-expanding type of pseudo-journalistic observation on the cheap ("Criminal Records," October 31). Hammer tells us what everyone knows: The crime rate in South Africa is appalling. What about the causes? What is being done to remedy the situation? What are the prospects for the future? What about rich blacks who also live in gated communities? All Hammer can do is make an excuse: It's "hard to tell what's real and what's exaggeration." I would have thought that was his job.

CYRIL RITTER
Brussels, Belgium

STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

I AM SHOCKED TO SEE RICHARD A. Posner give credence to the bureaucratic whine seeking to excuse the miserable performance of FEMA in New Orleans: namely, that FEMA was somehow "demoted" by inclusion in the Department of Homeland Security and



"had to stand in line, waiting its turn for the attention of the beleaguered secretary of Homeland Security" ("Our Incompetent Government," November 14). Every bureaucrat would like his bureau to be free of meaningful supervision, but that doesn't mean that freedom would improve its performance. I have seen no evidence that FEMA's failures were related in any way to the chain of command within which it operated. It is equally absurd to suggest that President Bush couldn't put FEMA in the hands of a competent administrator because "emergency response ... is not a formal profession like medicine or law." Hundreds of executives across the United States have dealt with disasters and disaster-planning at the local, state, or national level.

LEE LEVITT
New York, New York

THE PROBLEM WITH GOVERNMENT is not that "[i]t is trying to do too

Please address letters to Correspondence, **The New Republic**, 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005; letters may also be sent electronically to letters@tnr.com. All letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be fewer than 200 words. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Please do not send letters via fax.

THE NEW REPUBLIC (ISSN 0028-6583), Vol. 233, Numbers 25-26, Issues 4,745-4,747, December 26, 2005—January 9, 2006. (Printed in the United States on December 15, 2005.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated March 28 & April 4, May 2 & 9, June 6 & 13, July 11 & 18, August 22 & 29, November 28 & December 5, and December 26, 2005 through January 9, 2006) at 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. For advertising inquiries, please contact Grant Loomis at (202) 508-4444 or our NY sales office at (212) 465-8447. Yearly subscriptions, $79.97; foreign, $119.97 (U.S. funds); Canada, $99.97 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $8.00 domestic and $10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling). © 2005 by The New Republic, LLC. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 628-9353. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. For hard copy reprints, call (202) 508-4444. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, and CD-ROM are available through ProQuest, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone (800) 521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: letters@tnr.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call (800) 827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

much." If government does not exist to protect its people from existential threats, be they natural or manmade, why does it exist at all? On the contrary, the reason modern government fails to protect the safety of the nation has more to do with the half-hearted bureaucratic structure of the modern state—something Posner alludes to earlier in his essay. Democratic government in modern society—and, by extension, the diffusion of decision-making power throughout a complicated bureaucratic infrastructure—will inevitably lead to the paradoxical conclusion that, because everybody is responsible, nobody is responsible. The more appropriate response is to make sure that policymakers properly vest new agencies and officials (like the director of national intelligence) with the power and authority to carry out their mission. Only by giving officials authority can we hold them accountable for misusing it or failing to use it properly.

SID IYER
Washington, D.C.

HOT COAL

STANLEY KAUFFMANN'S REVIEW oddly criticizes the movie *North Country* for male chauvinism because Charlize Theron is "simply too beautiful" for the role of Josey Aimes ("Women's Worlds," November 14). I wonder if Kauffmann saw the description of Lois Jenson (the lead plaintiff in the real life class-action suit), which appears in the fine book that inspired the film. On starting work at Eveleth Mines, Jenson "was twenty-seven years old, with shoulder-length wavy blond hair, blue eyes, and pale, clear skin—a Scandinavian beauty with a slender waist and an elegant long neck." Kauffmann is clearly guilty of stereotypical thinking about women miners—and maybe a bit of male chauvinism himself.

DANIEL B. EDELMAN
Washington, D.C.

STANLEY KAUFFMANN RESPONDS: I'm certainly guilty of never having had a previous thought about women miners. I wasn't even aware that there was such a thing as stereotypical thinking about them. I haven't seen the book, but its readers didn't have Jenson's face constantly before them as they read, while viewers of the film keep seeing Theron. And, lovely as Jenson doubtlessly was at 27, she didn't bring to the mine a film star's aura.

ENIGMA VARIATIONS

ANDREW M. SIEGEL'S ARTICLE—demonizing a decent man and a distinguished public servant and jurist because he is genial—is errant nonsense ("Nice Disguise," November 14). We know what Samuel Alito stood for as a U.S. attorney and a judge in the years he held appointive office. But no one can possess the clairvoyance to meaningfully predict what a Justice Alito might do and how he would interact with his colleagues on the Supreme Court. Do we forget Justices Felix Frankfurter, Hugo Black, and Earl Warren?

RAY BRAMUCCI
Pompton Plains, New Jersey

SAVE THE CHILDREN

THE SINCERE CHRISTIANS OF Dover, Pennsylvania, are rightly concerned about intelligent design ("Dover Soul," November 14). From a mainstream viewpoint, the antediluvian creationism behind ID is embarrassing. Even St. Paul realized you can't read the scriptures literally. Given my own children's reaction, political manipulation of cartoonish versions of Christianity can only eclipse the beautiful substance. Worse, intelligent design raises the theodicy problem. If the design is intelligent, where did the appendix, cancer, or human propensity to violence come from? The Christian answer requires reference to a rich body of theology, but it is unimaginable that a pseudoscientific intelligent design class could cope with that. (Not that many self-ordained fundamentalist preachers can, either, but that's another issue.) The result will be that, given the simplistic intelligent-design question without the subtle theological answer, the children of Dover will end up mistaking pseudo-theology for real theology (and hence rejecting the Western theological tradition altogether), although the political intent today is to feed them pseudoscience in lieu of science.

DAVID SCHRAA
Washington, D.C.

continued on page 37

January 9 at Noon ET

The Alito Confirmation on C-SPAN

Follow the confirmation hearings for Judge Samuel Alito as Associate Justice to the United States Supreme Court.

LIVE as they happen
C-SPAN TV, C-SPAN Radio, & C-SPAN.org

PRIME TIME each night
C-SPAN TV

Visit c-span.org for complete schedule.

C-SPAN

Created by Cable. Offered as a Public Service.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bad News

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

TWO MONTHS AGO, I BEGAN reading the newspaper with a new set of eyes. That's when THE NEW REPUBLIC launched *The Plank* (www.tnr.com/blog/theplank), a crackling blog to which I regularly contribute. Before my new career, I had largely consumed the *Times*, the *Post*, and the *Journal* in search of information. Now I read them in search of items. This eternal quest for *Plank* grist has changed my relationship to these papers. They used to be my Starbucks buddies, but now I treat them more as adversaries, to be debunked and ridiculed.

Newspapers deserve an army of enemies that nag them to be less lazy, less timid, and less nice. But they don't deserve the savage treatment that they routinely receive in the blogosphere. The problem isn't just that they have been flogged by bloggers desperate for material. It's that the blogosphere nurses an ideological disdain for "Mainstream Media"—or MSM, as it has derisively (and somewhat adolescently) come to be known. Perusing the *Huffington Post*, a hub of liberal blogging, you'll find the MSM lambasted for its "usual sub-par, unsatisfactory, wholly misinformed, shitty job"; the MSM is, after all, filled with "lazy stenographer[s] ... posing as journalist[s who] will gladly cut and paste this Republican propaganda." Or, to put it even more bluntly, the "Beltway media really makes no effort to do anything other than parrot totally out-of-touch conventional wisdom—no matter how inane, stupid and ridiculous it is."

You would expect this kind of populism from the right, which long ago pioneered the trashing of the MSM, or, as Spiro Agnew famously called its practitioners, "nattering nabobs of negativism." The right has used media-bashing as political gimmickry—"Annoy the media, vote for Bush" was a 1992 slogan—and to produce mega-selling books like Bernard Goldberg's manifesto, *Bias*. When they take these shots, they don't just intend to rally their rank and file. They want to weaken the press so it will stop obstructing their agenda, a motive that liberal bloggers seem to have forgotten. By repeating conservative criticisms about the allegedly elitist, sycophantic, biased MSM, liberal bloggers have played straight into conservative hands. These bloggers have begun unwittingly doing conservatives' dirty work.

What they're attacking is the MSM's Progressive-era ethos of public-minded disinterestedness. By embracing the idea of objectivity, newspapers took a radical turn from the raw partisanship that guided them in the nineteenth century. "Without fear or favor" was *Times* owner Adolph Ochs's famous phrase. That "objective" style worked well for many years, because, in the postwar period, political elites shared broad assumptions about policy with one another—and the media. But the Bush administration has violently rejected that consensus. And, instead of playing by the old rules that governed the relationship between reporters and the White House, it has exploited them. For starters, there was the 2000 campaign, in which the press presented Bush as essentially the heir to Clintonian centrism, even though most of his policy prescriptions should have led reporters to a very different conclusion. The Bushies pulled off this legerdemain—and repeated the trick many times—by taking advantage of the news media's disinterested style, which obliges it to give a hearing to both sides of a debate, even if one side has uttered a total falsehood. My colleague Jonathan Chait has argued, "[The press is] evenhanded to a fault, presenting every side of an argument as equally valid, even if one side uses demonstrably false information and the other doesn't. Bush has exploited this tendency ruthlessly, most memorably in 2000, when he described his tax cut as consuming a mere quarter of the projected budget surplus."

Perhaps the rules of journalism should be modernized to short-circuit this tactic. Reporters should have greater latitude to point out distortions without worrying that they have violated the laws of objectivity. And there's already evidence that some newspapers have gotten wise to the administration's game, adopting a more adversarial stance. But, after examining the news media's failings, many liberal bloggers still conclude that the system is beyond repair. They have begun to dismiss the MSM as doomed avatars of the ancien régime. Atrios, one of the most popular of the liberal bloggers, recently threw up his arms: "If idiots destroy institutions there's no reason to continue to respect them." (Their derisive attitude resembles nothing more than the New Left, which charged journalism with dulling the sense and sensibility of the masses, preventing them from seeing the horrors of the capitalist order.)

The mainstream blogosphere (MSB) is only too happy to bury the old media regime, because it has an implicit vision for a new order, one that would largely consist of ... bloggers. In other words, they envision a universe that resembles the nineteenth-century partisan newspapers or the Fleet Street model, where writers and thinkers break from the illusion of "objectivity" and print the "truth." (I acknowledge that the liberal blogosphere is hardly a monolith and that blogs don't always lend themselves to coherent thought, but common themes and arguments are clear enough.)

This model stinks for countless reasons. But its most fundamental flaw is that bloggers will always be dismissed by their opponents as biased. And, while conservatives would like to treat the *Times* and the *Post* this way, they can't. They know that if a story—for example, Abu Ghraib or the CIA secret prisons—appears in one of those papers, it most likely has a strong basis in fact. Despite black marks like WMD reportage—and a small but visible minority of bad-apple reporters—old media still have enough prestige and authority to play referee.

There's another reason that liberals shouldn't be so quick to help conservatives crush old media. Because of the right's alliance with business, it simply has more resources to shovel at its institutions—and it has been doing exactly that for the last 40 years. And, unlike liberals, conservatives have already proved themselves masters of partisan media, where they reduce their political program into highly saleable, entertaining populism. If the battle of ideas doesn't have credible, neutral arbiters like the so-called MSM—and liberals jump into an ideological shoving match with bigger, badder, conservative outlets—there's no question which side will prevail.

FRANKLIN FOER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

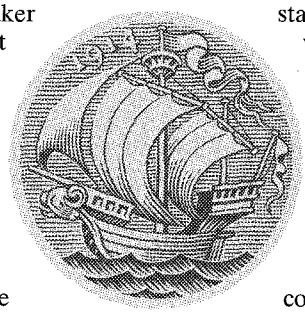
House Rules

PERHAPS NO ONE better personifies the current era of congressional politics than Jack Abramoff, the disgraced former lobbyist indicted on conspiracy and fraud charges in August. True, Abramoff exhibited unusual creativity in the combinations and permutations of his ethics-bending strategies. While petitioning Congress for a single provision on Indian gaming rights, for instance, he treated legislators to a Scottish golf junket, funneled money through a phony youth charity, and tried to slip the measure into two unrelated pieces of legislation. But, as a steady stream of indictments and ever-multiplying investigations has demonstrated, Abramoff's sins were exceptional only in degree, not in kind.

Thanks to a venal Republican leadership and its K Street allies, corruption and rule-bending under this Congress have become pedestrian affairs. The views of the minority party are rarely considered; Democrats are usually denied any role in crafting legislation. Meanwhile, K Street has no trouble making its voice heard. Lobbyists routinely pay for questionable congressional travel to exotic locales—a study last year found that private interests had spent a total of $14 million on more than 4,000 congressional junkets since 2000. Former House members haunt the halls—and even the floor of the chamber, rounding up votes on behalf of the corporate interests they now represent; between 1998 and 2004, some 200 of them registered as federal lobbyists. And, when it comes to passing legislation, a favorite GOP tactic is to hold votes open until enough arms can be twisted—too often with thinly veiled threats or bribery—to assure a majority.

Some good ideas for cleaning up this mess have now arrived in the form of a 14-point reform proposal announced last week by a quartet of senior Democratic representatives: Dave Obey of Wisconsin, Barney Frank of Massachusetts, David Price of North Carolina, and Tom Allen of Maine. The plan would ban lobbyist-sponsored travel and prohibit alumni from lobbying on the House floor. It would require that all votes be closed within 20 minutes, unless both party's leaders or floor managers agree otherwise. And, to ensure that members know exactly what they are voting on, it would mandate that copies of all bills be available 24 hours before they are brought to a vote.

Contrast these substantive proposals with a suggestion made two days later by House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert. Hastert broached the idea of additional ethics-training sessions to better enable "members on both sides of the aisle to understand the nuances of House rules." Failure to understand nuances, of course, is not what ails the body politic. As Ohio Republican Representative Steve Chabot rightly noted to *The New York Times*, "[C]ommon sense and integrity should tell anyone who has made it to Congress that you don't take bribes."



Unfortunately, Hastert's closed-door suggestion made the *Times*, and the quartet's press conference didn't. That's partly because, given the current power imbalance in Congress, the quartet's plan isn't likely to go anywhere. But it didn't help that the four Democrats peppered their remarks with wonkish terms like "earmarking," "extended roll calls," and "motions to recommit." Only once did they use a variant of the word "corruption." They mentioned Abramoff in passing but not the other Republicans in ethical trouble: Randy "Duke" Cunningham, Tom DeLay, Bill Frist, Bob Ney, and Michael Scanlon.

That's too bad, because Democrats risk fumbling a great opportunity to score gains in the run-up to the 2006 midterm elections. Among voters, congressional corruption is registering loud and clear. An Associated Press–Ipsos poll last week found that 88 percent of adults find American political corruption a "very serious" or "somewhat serious" problem. And, when last month's Gallup poll asked people how they would rate the "honesty and ethical standards" of various professional groups, congressmen came out near the bottom, above only advertisers, car salesmen, and telemarketers.

The Democrats need to be out in front on this issue, pairing substantial proposals for reform with a narrative about Republican indiscretion and incompetence—linking outright bribery to rule-manipulation designed to pay off fat cats and ram through an unpopular agenda. A line about the "Republican culture of corruption" has started to creep into Democratic talking points. But this needs to be a sustained effort, with points scored at every opportunity and the whole caucus involved, not just four congressmen. If Democrats can demonstrate to voters that they are truly committed to cleansing the culture of corruption, they may be able to achieve a power shift and also get real reform. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On the Hill

Tug of War

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY

MOST OF THE time, House Democrats can't get the press to pay attention to them. But there's nothing like a good fight over Iraq to get the cameras rolling. That's why, last Wednesday, a throng of reporters staked out a Capitol Hill meeting room where the House's Democratic caucus had convened to debate its increasingly obvious split over Iraq. A media advisory had promised that Democratic leaders would talk to the press at 10 a.m., after the meeting. But, as the clock ticked past the designated hour—20 minutes, then 30—the Cannon Caucus Room's heavy doors remained shut. Finally, they swung open, and out strode Dennis Kucinich, of all people. Seeming to relish a momentary return to the spotlight, the dovish ex-presidential candidate stepped to the microphones and declared dramatically: "The debate continues inside! We are trying to achieve unanimity!" But he apparently didn't expect to find it. Rather than return to the bull session, the diminutive representative grabbed his coat and disappeared down a nearby staircase.

A few minutes later, the doors opened again, and dozens of Democrats poured forth—many looking grim-faced. The resplendently attired minority leader, Nancy Pelosi, took to the microphones, accompanied by three other senior Democrats, and strained to present the meeting as a success. "We heard from many, many members of our caucus," she said. "And what we heard was a respect for our differing views on the subject of the timing of when we leave Iraq." In other words: no consensus.

That was hardly a surprise. Even the Democrats at the microphones couldn't agree. Standing beside Pelosi was her deputy, the garrulous silver-haired Democratic whip, Steny Hoyer of Maryland. Only the week before, Pelosi and Hoyer had delivered starkly divergent responses to Pennsylvania Democrat John Murtha's dramatic pre-Thanksgiving call for a rapid withdrawal from Iraq. Within days, Pelosi had endorsed Murtha's plan, while Hoyer released a statement warning of a national security "disaster" if U.S. troops exited too quickly. A just-published *Washington Post* story about how moderates like Hoyer were unhappy with Pelosi had everyone on edge. At a breakfast that very morning, *Roll Call* would later report, Hoyer had exchanged tense words with one of Pelosi's top confidantes, George Miller of California. Murtha, meanwhile, was making his irritation with Hoyer known to other members.

Just the sort of thing the press wanted to know about. With increasing agitation, Pelosi batted down questions about her differences with Hoyer—claiming, absurdly, to be unfamiliar with the specifics of her top deputy's widely discussed statement. "I was busy last week," Pelosi said curtly. "I don't know the context in which he made that statement." As for Hoyer, he dashed off before the questioning began. Like an unhappily married couple, Hoyer and Pelosi find dodging questions a lot easier than discussing their problems with each other.

SUPERFICIALLY, HOUSE DEMOCRATS have stood fairly united since the 2004 election. But under the surface lie deep fissures between the caucus's liberal Pelosi faction and its moderate Hoyer faction—particularly over the Iraq war. Until recently, however, Pelosi had kept a low profile on the war—presumably aware that her Bay Area–liberal image goes over in rural swing districts about as well as erotic performance art. "She has been personally very skeptical of Iraq from the get-go and I think in the interest of the broader caucus has put aside her own strong views and tried to keep the caucus unified," says Adam Schiff, a moderate Democrat from California. That's why some Democrats were stunned that she so conspicuously embraced Murtha's withdrawal plan earlier this month. To some Democrats, Pelosi should have let Murtha remain in the lead. "Murtha was clearly the key messenger on this," says a former House Democratic leadership aide. Now the Murtha plan can also be called the Pelosi plan, with all the culturo-political baggage that entails.

But the dynamics of Pelosi's world made keeping mum impossible—even if it meant alienating moderates like Hoyer. For months, she has faced rising pressure on several fronts. Within the caucus, there is her emboldened liberal base, including the 70 members of the House's Out of Iraq Caucus, who increasingly believe they speak for the public. "They stand up in meetings saying the American people want to get out," says a senior House Democratic aide. (Never mind that polls show the public still values success over withdrawal.) When she ran for leader in 2002, Pelosi promised to draw clearer distinctions with Republicans, and that's what her liberal allies expect. "The American people are thirsty for Democrats to offer an alternative on Iraq, and I would argue that it's a dereliction of our responsibility not to provide one," says Florida Representative Robert Wexler. Pelosi is also strongly influenced by her highly liberal inner circle. In addition to her top confidant, the combative Miller, others with Pelosi's ear include Rosa DeLauro of New Haven; Anna Eshoo of Palo Alto; and Jan Schakowsky, a fiery crusader from Chicago's upscale Lakefront area. All are critical of the war.

Perhaps even more relevant is what Pelosi hears outside of Washington. Liberal donors on the fund-raising circuit constantly tell her that Democrats are timid on Iraq. "She's been catching a lot of heat on the road," says the senior House aide. Pelosi has even been taking flak in her district for her relatively low profile on Iraq. "Pelosi has played it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

safe, placing politics and fund-raising over policy and conscience," charged a May 2005 letter in *The San Francisco Chronicle*. Another fumed that "Pelosi does accept our illegal invasion and our continued occupation of a country whose people want us out. I find it difficult to accept that she speaks for San Francisco to the world." Last month, one vituperative antiwar blogger declared her the "Shame of San Francisco." Says a House Democratic leadership aide, "You've got our base saying, 'Where the hell have you been? You've got no spine.' "

For Hoyer, maintaining his centrist, give-war-a-chance position has been far easier. One reason is his district: Whereas President Bush tallied just 15 percent in Pelosi's backyard, he pulled 42 percent in Hoyer's. Hoyer's base of House support, meanwhile, consists largely of the 80 or so Democrats who voted for the Iraq war resolution and who supported Pelosi's main rival in the 2002 leader's race: Martin Frost of Texas. Frost, who has since retired, was a pro-gun Iraq war supporter who insisted that House Democrats must moderate their image—especially on national security—if they hoped to win conservative swing districts and retake the House. Since Frost's exit, Hoyer, who also supported the war, has carried the moderates' torch. Earlier this year, for instance, Hoyer huddled with 15 like-minded House moderates—including such hawks as Ike Skelton of Missouri, Jane Harman of California, and John Spratt of South Carolina—to develop a national security strategy meant in part to show that House Democrats take the issue seriously. And, while his overall voting record is fairly liberal, Hoyer is also much closer than Pelosi to big business and K Street lobbyists; he has split with her on recent free-trade votes and on bankruptcy reform.

The differences between Pelosi and Hoyer are stylistic as well as ideological. Pelosi likes to crusade for grand moral causes—be it AIDS policy in the 1980s or China's human rights record in the 1990s or Iraq now. Hoyer is more of a pragmatic, old-school politico. "Steny is almost a caricature of a politician," says a senior House Democratic staffer. "He's always schmoozing." Pelosi is an awkward public speaker prone to malapropisms. (Last week, she referred to defending America's "nuclear, biological, and chemical plants." *Biological?*) Hoyer, by contrast, delights in having an audience, and he often invites reporters to his office for long bull sessions.

But the Hoyer-Pelosi relationship is perhaps most defined by rivalry. In 2001, Pelosi defeated Hoyer in a hard-fought race for Democratic whip, during which they clashed about the ideological face of the caucus. The friction has never quite cooled. While Pelosi cuts a sunny public profile—always dressed to the nines and flashing a radiant smile—Democrats say she runs a tough, even paranoid, political machine with a vengeful disposition toward current and former adversaries. This has been particularly true of Frost and his backers: Frost supporters have been passed over for key committee assignments, and precious few are included in important leadership and political-strategy discussions. Pelosi has also effectively exiled Frost himself from the Democratic political arena. She openly opposed his recent bid for Democratic National Committee chairman. And, when a major liberal interest group recently proposed to hire Frost for a key position, according to one source, Pelosi sent word that she wouldn't work with him.

Pelosi has no choice but to work with Hoyer. But she doesn't always like it. In April, for instance, she blew up at the whip after he and 71 other moderates defected to vote for the Republican-backed bankruptcy-reform bill. Pelosi effectively accused Hoyer of selling out to his corporate donors. Moderates, noting that they'd voted for virtually the same bill several times in past years—and would look foolish if they switched now—were appalled. "She seems to thrive on conflict," says a former House Democratic leadership aide. "When she wins a leadership race, she never stops running against that person. She beat Steny, but she has never stopped punishing him for running in the first place."

The Pelosi camp downplays any rift. "They're not best friends," the current leadership aide says. "But I don't think she goes after anybody who disagrees with her." When asked about her relationship with Hoyer, however, Pelosi tends to look like she's sucking a lemon. "She gets stiff and reticent to say anything nice," as one Hoyer backer puts it. Sure enough, at a recent press conference, Pelosi replied frostily to a question about their relationship. "It's fine," she snapped through a steely smile. "Mr. Hoyer and I go way back. . . . And I do not understand why you are making such a big issue of this."

THE PELOSI-HOYER rivalry may next play out in proxy-war fashion in a race for Democratic caucus vice chair. The current front-runner is New York Representative Joseph Crowley, one of Hoyer's top allies. Democrats are watching to see how much weight Pelosi throws behind another candidate, her friend Schakowsky. The position itself is fairly meaningless, but its outcome could be symbolic for Pelosi—especially if she fears, as some suspect, that Hoyer might someday challenge her position as House leader. That becomes more likely if House Democrats don't meet soaring expectations in the 2006 midterm elections.

Meanwhile, House moderates are in the process of reasserting themselves on Iraq. A group that includes Hoyer, led by Californian Ellen Tauscher, is drafting a set of principles about Iraq policy. Although it calls for a substantial phased troop withdrawal, the document implicitly favors stability in Iraq over exiting, and it could serve as a counterpoint to the Murtha plan for moderate Democratic House candidates. But some moderates fear the damage has been done. "Nancy can raise money, there ain't no question about that," says one moderate House Democrat allied with Hoyer. "But, as far as sophisticated political acumen and political skills, it's just not there." Unfortunately, for Democrats, neither is an easy reconciliation for this feuding couple. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Baghdad Dispatch

Court Side

BY TAMARA CHALABI

THE CROWD OF spectators at the Iraqi High Tribunal on December 5 included a mixture of Iraqis—general assembly members and civil society activists—and Westerners. Among the Iraqis was a soft-spoken, pious woman named Shaza. Last year, Shaza recounted to me in detail her torture in prison as a 15-year-old, with her mother and younger siblings, after the Mukhabarat secret service had taken her father in broad daylight from their comfortable Baghdad home, never to be seen again. She wears a perpetual expression of subdued pain on her face, betraying her otherwise determined effort to make Iraq a better place.

As we were being searched for the final time before entering the main court hall, Shaza turned around and said that she couldn't sleep after seeing Saddam Hussein refuse to identify himself to the court on the trial's opening day in October. "They are conning the Iraqi people with this court; this isn't about us," I overheard her say as I discussed the court's problems—its lack of communication with the wider public, its administrative issues—with a human rights observer. (Full disclosure: my cousin, Salem Chalabi, was formerly the administrator for the special tribunal trying Saddam, but he is no longer affiliated with the court; my father, Ahmed Chalabi, is a deputy prime minister of Iraq.) This contrast between the two women, Shaza and the human rights observer, one concerned with due process and the other with the pain of the millions of victims in Iraq, highlighted the schizophrenic atmosphere surrounding the trial. There are as many contesting interests here as there are in Iraq at large. Saddam became Iraq and he made Iraq become him; he was not only big brother, but big father. For most of the 26 million Iraqis, his trial represents decades of looking into the past—a history that has been interrupted, filled with horrors, and experienced firsthand. They will never get another chance. For others like me, who were exiled from Iraq, it has been a history denied. Both are severe plights.

SEALED OFF BY a glass windowpane that overlooks the court, the gallery we sat in was more Shaftesbury Avenue matinee than criminal court. While waiting, the MPs said triumphantly to each other, "What time does the film begin? We've waited 35 years; I guess we can wait a bit more." The curtains were drawn, the judge walked in, everyone rose (except Saddam's defense team), we were seated again, and the show began. Saddam was omnipresent, even before he entered the courtroom, the last of eight defendants accused of the 1982 massacre in Dujail, a mostly Shia town north of Baghdad where more than 140 people were killed after he escaped an assassination attempt there. When he walked in, casually and with measure, all his cronies stood up in respect. "I greet the men," he blurted. It was ironic given how unmanly they looked, slight and small. And it was difficult to imagine that they could have unleashed horrors on the Iraqi people ... until they began to speak.

Although everyone had seen him in court on television, in person, Saddam still generated excitement. Several in the gallery could not contain themselves and started cursing him. Shaza was visibly shaken at the sight of him.

The defense team paralleled Saddam in its behavior, obstructionism being the order of the day. Sitting there were Iraqis, Jordanians, and, of course, Ramsey Clark. The former U.S. attorney general joined the defense team in rising when Saddam walked in, seemingly oblivious to the internal dynamic between these men, the legacy of the leader still lingering on.

The team includes Qatar's former justice minister, Najeeb Nuaimi, whose main focus was to delay witnesses from speaking. His rendition of Iraq's recent history was infused with the sort of Arab nationalist rhetoric that Saddam force-fed his people: Saddam is still the president of Iraq, a great Arab leader; the court is illegal because it was set up under U.S. military occupation (there was no acknowledgment of an elected government, albeit interim). Nuaimi personified Iraq's dilemma with its Arab neighbors—insulted and rejected by them for celebrating the fall of the tyrant whose sting the Arabs never felt. Saddam looked at the Qatari approvingly and then followed in a hoarse voice, "Long live the Arab nation." His half-brother, Barzan Ibrahim Hasan Al Tikriti, added, "Long live Iraq, long live the Baath." They sounded like two unruly kindergarteners disobeying their teacher. It was also an insult to the leading judge, who is Kurdish.

This trial is so much more for Iraqis than an exercise in justice. The court has become a battleground for the new Iraq, a tug-of-war between persistent Baathist ideologies, exemplified by Saddam and his defense team and the fragile structure of Iraqi "democracy"—besides the Kurdish judge, four other judges, drawn from various segments of Iraqi society, preside over Saddam's trial, with behind-the-scenes support from the United States and the United Kingdom. It will be a fine balance managing all these expectations.

BACK IN THE gallery, emotions were running high. One government official literally jumped out of his seat when he heard Saddam. "What Arab nation? Look what you did to us!" he retorted as he was restrained by the court security. I sympathized with him and felt impotent not being able to shake the judge into more

Tamara Chalabi's book, THE SHI'IS OF JABAL 'AMIL AND THE NEW LEBANON, *is forthcoming in January.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Suffering from Chronic Pain? For Solutions, Read On...

Up to 30 million Americans suffer from under-treated chronic pain.[1] Families suffer with them. For most, suffering is completely unnecessary.

Problem: Medical schools often give pain treatment low priority and discourage students from a pain specialty.
Solution: Encourage medical schools to prioritize teaching pain management per "best practice" as recommended by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO)[2] and also provide educational workshops for physicians already in practice.

Problem: Even when properly informed, doctors are often afraid to follow "best practice" guidelines for patients who require large amounts of medication or even to accept pain patients out of fear of being prosecuted by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).
Solution: Seek another doctor if your prescription fails to relieve your pain. If you are unable to obtain adequate medication, complain to your senators and congressman and urge them to investigate the DEA's failure to respect "best practice" and prosecution of conscientious physicians. (Conscientious physicians tend to attract serious chronic pain sufferers, and hence prescribe greater quantities of opioids in general and huge doses to some patients as necessary. Thus they attract the scrutiny and animosity of overzealous DEA agents and prosecutors who either don't understand "best practice" or are seeking headlines to divert attention from the DEA's overall failure to prevent widescale criminal diversion of licit and illicit drugs.)

Problem: Many patients suffer needlessly because they either are too stoic to complain or they mistakenly fear addiction.
Solution: Educate patients about the importance of reporting unrelieved pain, and make them aware that opioid treatment is rarely addictive.

Problem: Loved ones often underestimate the debilitating effects of chronic pain and discourage taking dosages as prescribed.
Solution: Involve family members in pain treatment consultations. Make them aware that their loved one's pain affects the entire family and can be successfully treated medically.

You are entitled to "Best Practice" treatment. Demand it!

Common Sense for Drug Policy
H. Michael Gray, Chair – Robert E. Field, Co-Chair
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org -- www.DrugWarFacts.org
www.ManagingChronicPain.org -- www.MedicalMJ.org
info@csdp.org

1) "Pain Facts: An Overview of American Pain Surveys," American Pain Foundation, from the web at http://www.painfoundation.org/print.asp?file=Library/PainSurveys.htm, last accessed Nov. 22, 2005.
2) Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations on Pain Management, from the web at http://www.jcaho.org/news+room/health+care+issues/jcaho+focuses+on+pain+management.htm, Nov. 22, 2005.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

firmness. Shaza was comforted by hearing the hoarseness in Saddam's voice; it was a sign that he was unwell. "At least the world can see him for what he is: a criminal. This is how he shouted at us after the 1991 uprising—I remember him so well, insulting the people of the south," she said.

During the court's first adjournment, we waited in the corridor, guided by American advisers and Western-trained Iraqis. One over-enthusiastic adviser kept repeating robotically, "This is democracy, people will appreciate this several years down the line. ... This is democracy." I could not help but think how patronizing he was, even though I agreed with his general premise that a fair trial is an important foundation for the new Iraq. Except it is a crooked foundation, because, to Iraqis, the fairness and justice to which he referred looked lopsided in favor of Saddam.

The trial resumed and the judge called the first witness, a man who had been ready to testify a week earlier but was prevented from doing so by Saddam's lawyers. A 38-year-old with graying hair walked in with a picture of some of the victims of Dujail. The moment of reckoning had come. For the first time in the history of Iraq, here was a witness standing in court with Saddam and accusing him of his crimes. Silence fell as Ahmad Hassan Mohammed began to speak. He lost seven of his ten brothers to Saddam. He spoke with the patience that comes from having waited so long for justice. One could tell he had rehearsed this moment in his mind a million times, a fantasy that one day would become a reality. He read a small prayer for the victims of Dujail, infused with references to the Shia imams, which must have sounded strange to the rest of the Arab-speaking TV viewers in the region. It struck me then how different Iraq is from its Arab neighbors, a country comprised of groups that are predominately minorities outside its borders. As Ahmad Mohammed raised the picture of the victims and held it up for everyone to see, Barzan blurted out, "To hell with them." It spoke volumes. Barzan, after all, had once been Iraq's human rights representative at the United Nations in Geneva.

The story of Dujail, its lush green palm-tree gardens and its many dead, unfolded. One story I can't forget is of Ahmad Mohammed's relative, whose infant son was dying from malnutrition in her cell. She appealed to a guard for help. The guard's only suggestion was that, when the child died, she should give it to him through the cell's small window so that his body wouldn't decay there. The boy died, and that is exactly what she did. He was speaking for so many Iraqis in that moment. Several people in the gallery were weeping. So, too, were a few court staff sitting in the panel below the judges facing Saddam and his men. Saddam did not flinch.

The interaction between the witness and the defendants was bizarre. It summed up the disdain and disrespect of Saddam's regime for the Iraqis. Every time the witness reached a crescendo of detailed gore, one of the defendants interjected, almost subconsciously. When Ahmad Mohammed referred to the tragedy of Karbala, a massacre that serves as an axiom of Shiism, he said that, even then, there was closure after 40 days—all the body parts were finally buried—but there was none in Dujail, where so many are still missing. Whether it was the reference to Karbala or to his own role in the Dujail massacre, Barzan shouted, "I am the head of the Mukhabarat! I am a patriot, not an Iranian like you." And there it was: the curse of Iraq's Arab Shia. Not good enough to be Arabs because they are Shia, the curse that led to so many being massacred by Saddam and deported to Iran. First, Saddam and his men insulted the judge; now, the witness.

I WAS TROUBLED by Saddam. Faced with this old man, I found it hard to react. I was intimidated by his legacy, yet I found him pathetic. A part of me saw him the way Hannah Arendt described Adolf Eichmann, as a banal figure. Another part of me saw him as a delusional man like Slobodan Milošević, unrepentant and defiant. Does Saddam know his evil? Do the others? Obsessed with ensuring a fair trial, the judge seemed too intimidated by hostile Western public opinion to impose order. He has a burdensome task. There is no precedent for this sort of thing in Iraq, and he has the eyes of the world watching him. He is also risking his life. And, yet, he disappointed: His impatience was directed more often at the witness than at the defendant. He failed to understand that these witnesses needed to speak, that Iraqis needed to listen, that this was part of a healing process.

For his part, Saddam broke every rule, interrupted the witness, ignored the judge's feeble objections, and betrayed his racism and sectarianism. When Ahmad Mohammed recounted an incident about his mother, a woman from Falluja who was also imprisoned, he chose to praise the Sunnis of Falluja and Ramadi who helped him. Saddam interrupted and asked, "Who is 'they,' the Sunnis or the Tikritis?" Ahmad Mohammed replied, "I am honored by the Sunnis; they are my maternal uncles." It gave me so much hope that this man, whose life is threatened by his decision to come and testify—and after so much suffering—still found a way to express gratitude for the compassion of another community that, at present, is feeling marginalized and frustrated. With his humanity and dignity, he chose to rise above the anger and pain to be on record in support of a peaceful Iraq.

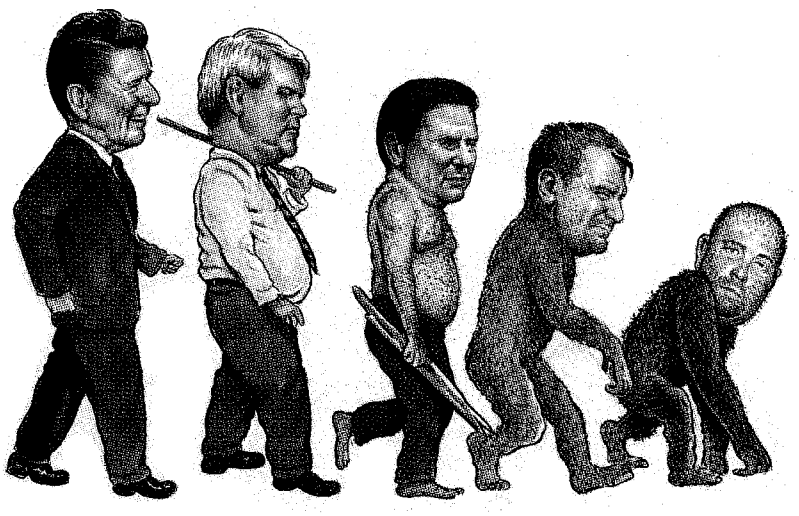
Shaza's morale was jerked around. She wanted so hard to believe in this process, and there were moments when she did, but they were quickly dashed by the judge's leniency and Saddam's disregard. The same emotional whiplash was being experienced outside the gallery, in the streets across Iraq. So many are disappointed that, even after Saddam is deposed, he can still command and defy a court of law. Speaking of the court, a young woman told me, "Why are they doing this to us; why do they want to provoke us and play with our feelings?" Others, but many fewer, are pleased that the world can see Saddam and his cronies for what they really are. I keep remembering the American adviser's words of wisdom: "This is what democracy is about, and people will learn." I just wished they didn't have to learn this in such a painful way. For the vast majority, testifying in court will be their only form of justice. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Introduction to

GOP D.C.

Washington, D.C., is the most powerful city in the world, a capital lined with grand monuments and crowded with intimidating VIPs. And, to the average visitor, it can also be a confusing place—one where it's difficult to understand the difference between Viveca Novak and Bob Novak, between a Choctaw and a Coushatta, between Official A and Representative #1. The Rough Guide to GOP D.C. seeks to demystify this town. You won't just visit slabs of marble and imbibe the spirit of democracy; you'll eat and drink in the skyboxes and hotel rooms where democracy is actually subverted (ahem, we mean practiced). You won't just learn about our nation's great legal system; you will snap photos of the actual spots where famous Washingtonians broke the law. While other guides explain how politicians win elections, you'll learn how they abuse power. After five years of George W. Bush's presidency and eleven years of GOP rule in Congress, Republicans have permanently altered the city's culture and character. This is a guide to the new Washington they have created.



RONALD REAGAN NEWT GINGRICH TOM DELAY JACK ABRAMOFF JAMES "PUDGY" FIORILLO*

A History of GOP D.C.

The first major wave of conservative settlers, who arrived in the 1980s and 1990s, encountered an indigenous Democratic civilization in serious decline. Much like the Aztecs and the Incas, the Democrats had constructed impressive monuments like the Welfare State and Regulatory Policy. Under the reign of President Bill Clinton, however, they succumbed to the temptations of imperial power, abusing a primitive congressional banking system and seducing young interns. So the arrival of the new settlers, mostly Southerners and Midwesterners of Caucasian stock, coincided with momentous upheaval. One visionary immigrant, Tom DeLay from Sugar Land, Texas, had a plan for a new city of elegantly circuitous money trails and a grid that would link lobbyists to the Republican Party. The DeLay plan for modernizing the city is also known as the K Street Project, and it benefits from the simplicity of its intentions: Want to work with the Republicans? Then you'd better hire Republicans at your law firms and lobbying shops—and then donate your money to Grover Norquist, conservative 527s, and other GOP D.C. charities. Nobody had ever dared to think so transparently.

The DeLay vision couldn't have come to fruition were it not for a stroke of luck. That luck came to Washington in the form of a failed energy executive, failed congressional candidate, and all-around late bloomer with a recognizable name and a refusal to compromise with himself. Together, Tom DeLay and George W. Bush (with the help of a plucky, can-do guy named Karl Rove) raised the city that has become a magnet for corporate lobbyists and tourists alike.

Visitors expecting to encounter a thriving civilization, however, will be disappointed. After a few hours of exploring, you will immediately recognize that GOP D.C. has taken an unfortunate turn. The city's culture has come to resemble the old Democratic regime in its final days of decay. Take the fall of Jack Abramoff, a lobbyist who helped De-

Illustration by Drew Friedman

*Fiorillo was indicted in September, charged with murdering the man who sold Jack Abramoff SunCruz casino.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lay make his vision for the city a reality. Abramoff once bilked Indian tribes for $80 million and enticed congressmen with golf trips to Scotland and free meals at his restaurants. Now he's facing prison. Or consider another popular attraction—the office of Vice President Dick Cheney. In the prelude to the Iraq war, intrepid tourists who enjoyed a good scare would travel here for warnings about mushroom clouds that might soon appear over GOP D.C. Adrenaline junkies now make the pilgrimage to the OVP on the off chance that they might glimpse Cheney or one of his aides trashing CIA analysts, former ambassadors, and other critics. But we suggest that you don't let GOP D.C.'s air of decline and omnipresent indictments interfere with the pleasures of your visit. If you place yourself in the 2002 mindset of the city's lobbyists or Republican congressmen, GOP D.C. can be a magical place.

Before You Leave

Getting Ready

Washington can be perilous, and visitors should not come unprepared. Just as you would seek inoculations before visiting a tropical nation, we strongly recommend getting lawyered-up prior to your arrival; with so many far-reaching criminal investigations underway, even an innocent visitor may find herself unexpectedly indicted (see "So You Think You're Going to Be Indicted," page 19). It's also wise to familiarize yourself with the Fifth Amendment. Be sure to stop at the ATM and stock up on cash—it's a useful way to make friends quickly on Capitol Hill. And, if you intend to conduct any serious business, it's essential that you brush up on your golf game: Nothing happens in Congress before it's been discussed on the links.

Dress

Pinstripes for men, brightly colored pantsuits for women. Avoid trendy fashions, which could lead to strange looks and questioning by police. If you plan on playing a few holes, consider purchasing a snappy National Republican Congressional Committee golf shirt. And a word of warning: Some establishments, especially downtown restaurants, may not admit you without a BlackBerry.

When to Go

Avoid Washington's notorious summer heat and visit during the end-of-year budget appropriations season. High-end restaurants will be full of lobbyists furiously wining and dining congressmen as they struggle to win budget items. Nocturnal activity on the House and Senate floor also peaks near the end of the calendar year, as Congress rushes to complete unfinished business before the holidays. For possible indictments and plea deals, please check local grand jury schedules.

Getting There and Away

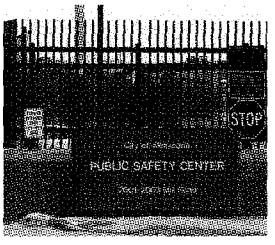
Washington is conveniently serviced by three major airports affording easy access to the capital—and, just as important, easy departure for congressional junkets to balmy and exotic locales. Junkets have become so widespread and popular that you might be able to wheedle your way onto one of them with enough schmoozing at Washington hotspots like The Capital Grille (see "Where to Eat," page 15). Or contact your local representative to see whether he'd be willing to invite you on his next lobbyist-funded jaunt. Washington's Reagan National Airport is the launching point for such popular domestic-junket destinations as Las Vegas, Hawaii, and Miami. (Take care not to drop the "Reagan" when mentioning the airport around Republicans, as some embittered liberals are wont to do.) Virginia's Dulles International and Maryland's Baltimore–Washington International airports service such choice overseas junket destinations as Paris, the Caribbean, and the South Pacific. (Travel tip: For his 2000 golf junket to Scotland and London, then–House Majority Leader Tom DeLay chose Dulles as his point of departure.) Check federal foreign-agent lobbying disclosure forms to determine which influence-peddlers are representing the foreign nation of your choice, and contact their firms about upcoming junkets.

Accommodations

Budget Options

With all the cash now pulsing through George W. Bush's Washington, the inevitable gentrification has set in. In the old days, you could stay at rustic abodes like Grover Norquist's group house on Capitol Hill—and eat dried cereal for dinner. When Norquist bought his own pad a few years back, those days came to a symbolic end. Only a few bargains remain.

Alexandria Detention Center, 2001 Mill Road, Alexandria, Virginia Imagine yourself as a First Amendment martyr, as you sleep in a complimentary jumpsuit on the same rock-hard cot that ruined Judy Miller's back. If you're a news junkie like Miller, you'll have to contend with your fellow guests changing the communal TV set back to "The Tyra Banks Show" whenever you flip to CNN. Bonus: female-friendly. **Cost:** Three months of your life, but meals included.



Heritage Foundation Dorm, 208 Massachusetts Avenue NW You can grab a room at the conservative think tank and shoot the breeze with young 'wingers into the wee hours of the night. While you may not be able to score your own room or a private bath, we've found that evangelicals make for surprisingly tidy roommates—and the libertarians won't care if you make a mess. **Cost:** Just $725 per month, though you may wake up and find yourself mysteriously convinced to take a second career as a pharmaceutical lobbyist.

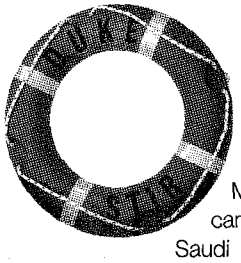
Mid-range

If you spend enough time in GOP D.C., you'll hear many of the native politicians complain about the "middle class getting squeezed." Sadly, when it comes to accommodations, this is the case.

***Duke-Stir*, 1000 Water Street SW** This good ship once housed former Representative Randy "Duke" Cunningham at the Capital Yacht Club—although a defense contractor actually owned the 42-foot boat. Before Cunningham accepted free lodging on the vessel, its previous owners, a gay couple, called it the *Bouy Toy*. Cunningham, however, was the one with the taste for antique French commodes. **Cost:** Depends entirely on your ability to deliver government contracts.

DeLay portrait by NewsCom, figure by Sharon Dominick/Istockphoto, composite by Christine Car; Alexandria Detention Center, Ritz-Carlton, and Heritage Foundation photos by Charles Steck; *Duke-Stir* by Lee Pettet/Istockphoto; fish from Signatures.com; Chalabi by Chris Hondros/Getty Images/Newscom; Norquist by Zuma Press/Nancy Kaszerman/Newscom; McClellan by Larry Downing/Reuters/Newscom; illustration by Drew Friedman

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Expensive

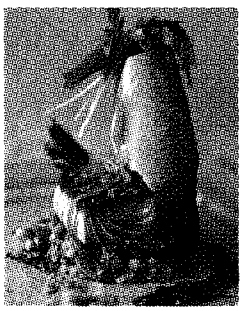
If you have the money to spend, luxe options abound. There are, for instance, the McMansions of McLean, Virginia, where you can stay side-by-side with Colin Powell, the Saudi ambassador, Republican congressmen, and lobbyists. Or there are more boutique routes to take.

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 1150 22nd Street NW This is where Michael Scanlon, protégé of Tom DeLay and Jack Abramoff, lived when he was at the height of his power. After a long day of bilking Indian tribes, you too can unwind at the hotel's Sports Club/LA and order up a bottle of Dom. **Cost:** $17,000 per month.

Undisclosed Location Despite the gruffness of its patron, it has all the frills and is designed for life in the age of terrorism. One downside: good luck finding it. **Cost:** So exclusive that the price tag remains a state secret.

Where to Eat

Signatures, 801 Pennsylvania Avenue NW As Jack Abramoff built his lobbying empire, he cobbled together a nice little gastronomical franchise, too. For a time, he had a kosher deli called Stacks, where you could get corned beef as paper thin as his fraud defense. After it closed, his culinary reputation rested with Signatures—the type of swank joint where you could order a $74 steak. In the old days, if you were Abramoff's friend, especially one in Congress, you could count on free grub. Over a 17-month period, Abramoff generously donated $180,000 in martinis and T-bones to his needy chums. **$$$$**



American Enterprise Institute Dining Room, 1150 17th Street NW You'll need a fellow at the neoconservative think tank to book you a table at this surprisingly elegant establishment. Just tell the waiter to stick your fare on Ahmed Chalabi's tab. **$$**

The Capital Grille, 601 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Pop a Lipitor in anticipation of a 24-ounce porterhouse, light a Davidoff cigar, and journey to this temple of lobbying. If you become a regular, you can rent your own private wine locker and immortalize your name on a brass plaque. As *Roll Call* once noted, the ambience in the wood-paneled establishment screams, "To hell with the have-nots." **$$$$$$$$$$$$**

St. Regis Hotel, 923 16th Street NW This hotel is the perfect setting for an early-morning rendezvous that you'd rather keep to yourself. Ideal for the times you want to make like Scooter Libby, assume the role of "former Hill staffer," and badmouth your enemies' wives to *New York Times* reporters. **$$$$$$#$%#!**

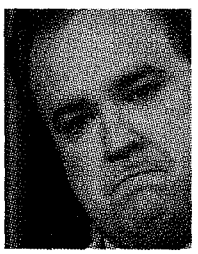
Things to Do

Visit the Zoo

On Wednesday mornings, almost every genus of the conservative species can be found in the conference room of the Americans for Tax Reform office on L Street. Watch as zookeeper Grover Norquist takes their temperatures, checks their teeth, and feeds them their weekly talking points—which, in accordance with new dietary restrictions, no longer include anything made by Abramoff Mills.

Helpful Hint: *Be sure to get there early. On days when Karl Rove is in attendance, the lines to get in can rival those to see the baby panda.*

Take in a Show



After several years as an understudy, Scott McClellan is now starring—and earning rave reviews—in the White House press briefing. He spins. He stalls. He tells flat-out untruths. You'll be moved to tears when he delivers classic lines like: "Let me make it very clear. As I said previously, he [Karl Rove] was not involved, and that allegation is not true in terms of leaking classified information, nor would he condone it." Better than *Cats*!

Helpful Hint: *If the White House press office says that day's show is sold out, pull what savvy theatergoers call a "Jeff Gannon" and tell them you work for a conservative website. (Best, however, not to mention your prior career as a male escort.)*

Go Fishing for Troglodytes

Hire a guide from Greenberg Traurig to take you fishing for lobbying clients—or, as Jack Abramoff famously called them, "monkeys," "morons," and "troglodytes." Learn how to reel in Indian gaming tribes, American territories, and African dictators.

Helpful Hint: *Tip well and the guide will teach you not only how to clean and gut your catch, but also how to fleece it for first-class airline tickets and four-star hotel accommodations.*

SPECIAL: FOR THE DEMOCRATIC TRAVELER

Washington is by and large a friendly and hospitable place. But, unfortunately, some prejudices can run deep here. The ruling Republicans are very contemptuous of Democrats, who are treated as inferiors and meddlesome interlopers. Just as Americans abroad may prefer to pose as Canadians, liberals visiting D.C. should consider disguising their political affiliation to avoid discrimination. Take care not to display anti-Bush materials near a presidential appearance, for instance, as Secret Service agents tend to bruise first and ask questions later. Drivers from blue states should consider renting a car in Virginia with local plates before approaching the Capitol or the White House. At least be sure to scrape off any lingering **DEAN FOR AMERICA** bumper stickers. And be prepared to encounter some conscience-shocking behavior. Visitors to the Capitol in particular may witness cruel and unusual treatment of the Democratic minority by GOP leaders. Republicans have even been known to mobilize the Capitol Police against insubordinate Democrats. In light of recent changes to federal detention and interrogation policies, you may wish to refrain from speaking out against such abuses.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Take a Day Trip

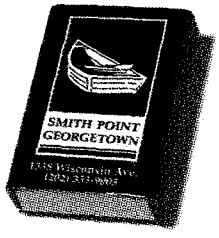
Rehoboth Beach, on the Delaware shore, is only a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Washington. There, you can stroll the boardwalk, eat funnel cake, and visit the rental beach house that was once home to the American International Center—the "think tank" Michael Scanlon founded and illegally used as a conduit for money he and Abramoff received from Indian gaming tribes.

Added Bonus: *Although his recent guilty plea means he'll likely have to resign from the Rehoboth Beach Patrol, of which he's been a member for the last four years, Scanlon may still make like David Hasselhoff and jump into the surf if you call for help.*

See an Extreme Sport

Who needs professional wrestling when you can watch the fabulous tag-team duo of Tom DeLay and Dennis Hastert strong-arm their colleagues into voting the GOP line? Grab a spot in the House of Representatives gallery and keep your eye on the House floor to see who the Hammer hammers and on whom the fat man sits. Scream with delight as a freshman representative is caught in a DeLay-Hastert sandwich and squeezed 'til he begs for mercy—and votes for corporate tax breaks.

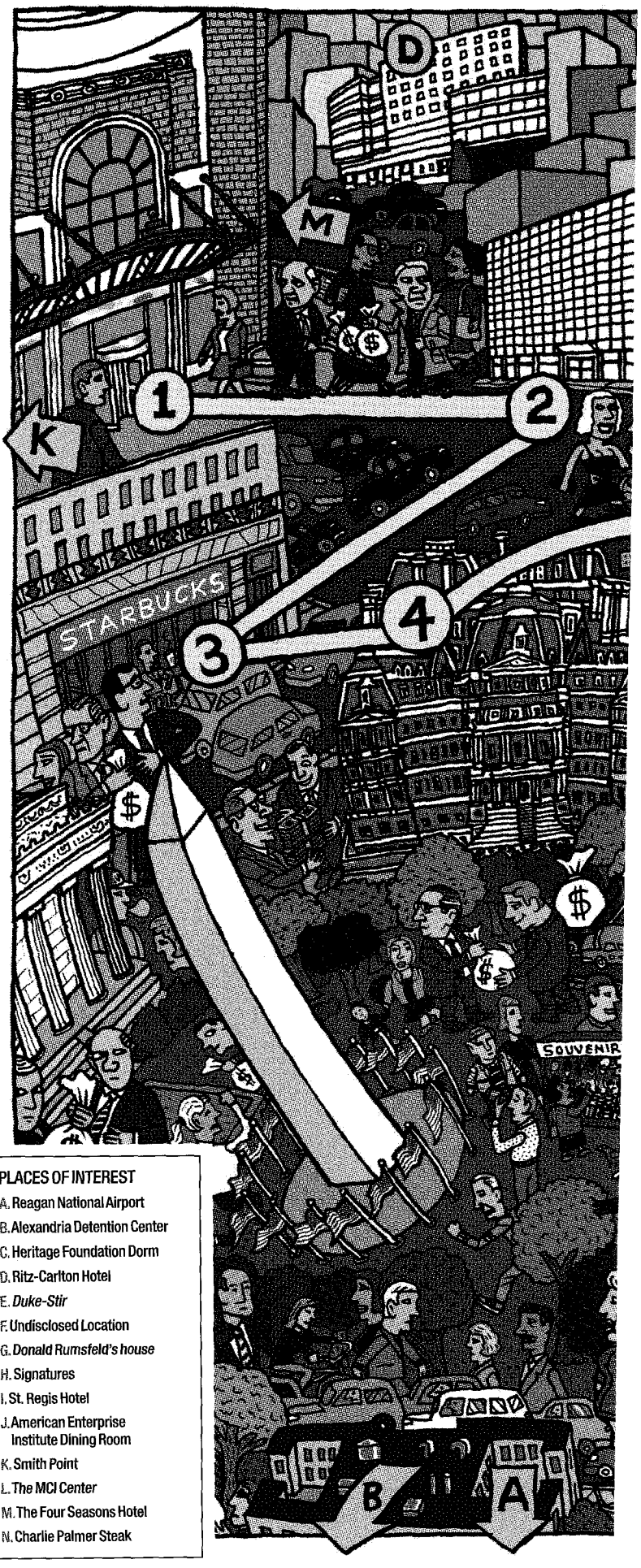
Added Bonus: *If the hour is late and the tally is close, you might even get to see DeLay use his signature (but outlawed) "Vote-My-Way-Or-Your-Son-Doesn't-Get-Any-Campaign-Contributions" move.*



Drinking and Nightlife

Smith Point, 1338 Wisconsin Avenue NW Put on your best Abercrombie & Fitch and stash a fistful of condoms and Senate business cards in your pocket! At this exclusive Georgetown bar, you can swill beer and rock to thumping music with the twentysomething daughters of the GOP establishment and the thirtysomething congressional staffers who ply them with alcohol. All the while, you'll be networking with tomorrow's generation of Republican indictees.

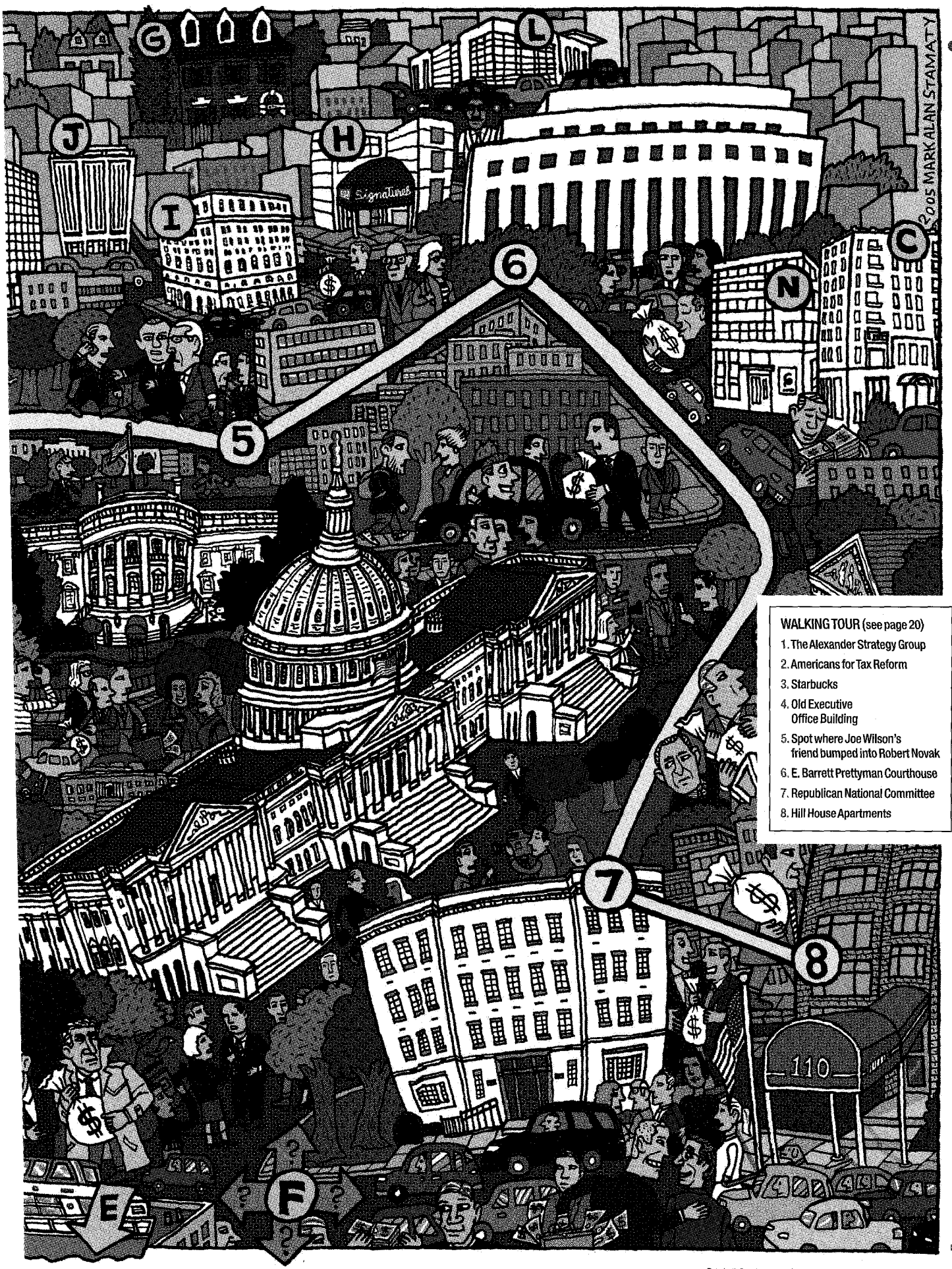
Jack Abramoff Skybox, MCI Center, 601 F Street NW Old Washington spent the evening at the Kennedy Center watching ballet. New Washington treks to this Penn Quarter hot spot to take in a Wizards game or the Three Tenors. At the height of Abramoff's influence, his skybox, made trendy by committee chairmen and administration officials with leverage on Indian gaming issues, offered a private, catered environment and the best seats in the house. The locals loved it because, unlike at the staid Kennedy Center, legislative business could be discussed while they enjoyed the show.



PLACES OF INTEREST

A. Reagan National Airport
B. Alexandria Detention Center
C. Heritage Foundation Dorm
D. Ritz-Carlton Hotel
E. *Duke-Stir*
F. Undisclosed Location
G. *Donald Rumsfeld's house*
H. Signatures
I. St. Regis Hotel
J. American Enterprise Institute Dining Room
K. Smith Point
L. The MCI Center
M. The Four Seasons Hotel
N. Charlie Palmer Steak

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



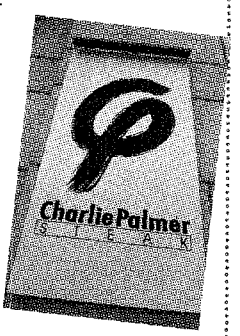
WALKING TOUR (see page 20)

1. The Alexander Strategy Group
2. Americans for Tax Reform
3. Starbucks
4. Old Executive Office Building
5. Spot where Joe Wilson's friend bumped into Robert Novak
6. E. Barrett Prettyman Courthouse
7. Republican National Committee
8. Hill House Apartments

Rehoboth Beach photo by Richard Tiklob; illustration by Mark Alan Stamaty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Charlie Palmer Steak, 101 Constitution Avenue NW *This labyrinthine restaurant occupies 13,400 square feet of power-dining space just steps from the Capitol. The building itself is a temple to lobbying, Washington's chief industry, and it houses the National Mining Association, Philip Morris, and several stories of law firms. This is where Washingtonians come to celebrate life's special occasions. When former Representative Jack Quinn recently moved from public servant to head of lobbying giant Cassidy & Associates, Republican members decamped to Charlie Palmer's to toast the job promotion. There's a similar scene on any given night. Come for the fund-raising, stay for the influence-peddling!*



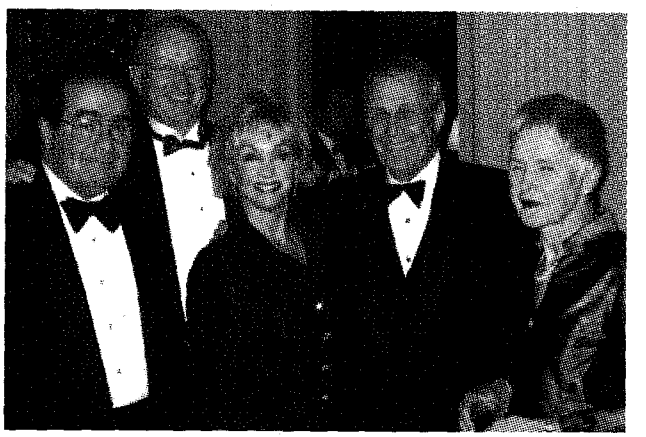
Brent Wilkes Hospitality Suite, The Westin Grand, 2350 M Street NW *Some cities have underground raves where the party changes venue every night. In Washington, there's the Wilkes Suite. The defense contractor once hosted in-the-know pals in a multi-bedroom spread at the Watergate, but later moved to the discreet confines of this stylish West End hotel. It's one of the most exclusive after-hours scenes in town, but, if you're lucky enough to get in, you'll enjoy . . . well, what happens in the Wilkes Suite stays in the Wilkes Suite.*

Cultural Hints

Even if your stay is short, you may find the habits of GOP D.C. unfamiliar and, sometimes, perplexing. This is entirely normal. But, as long as you keep an open mind, you'll find that you'll adjust and, before you know it, change.

Religion: Washingtonians take religion very seriously, and Sundays are a time when they shed their rank and join with fellow Americans in prayer. If you take a Sunday trip to the Episcopal Falls Church in Falls Church, Virginia, it's important to be respectful. Dress nicely and stay quiet. You may wish to strike up a brotherly conversation with speechwriter Michael Gerson or CIA chief Porter Goss, but remember: They are here to worship with their peers, not with you. Especially important to the worshippers are the interactions with fellow worshippers immediately after the service. This, again, means someone other than you.

Jesting: One of the delights of GOP D.C. is that its natives are always ready to enjoy a laugh at the expense of their enemies, and they'll certainly welcome a carefully chosen joke. As a newcomer, you may wish to stick to a few areas that are sure to delight: The Oil-for-Food scandal at the United Nations and September 11 apologist Ward Churchill will rarely disappoint. Try to avoid humor related to a few memorable topics: Tom DeLay (connections of, golf trips of, trial of); Bill Frist (finances of, cat relationships of); Dennis Hastert (ethics class proposal of, love for Boeing tankers of, weight of); the Coalition Provisional Authority (Iraqi oil-revenue disbursal of, accomplishments of); I. Lewis Libby (boss of, nickname of, indictment of); Ralph Reed (anti-gambling views of, casino connections of, creepily boyish looks of); Bob Ney (record of, friends of); Medicare prescription-drug bill (cost of, universal ridicule of); the Northern Mariana Islands (factories of, trips to); and General Eric Shinseki.



This Donald Rumsfeld–Antonin Scalia interaction is nicely balanced, insulating against the status-drag of obscure California Republican Representative Buck McKeon (second from left).

Being Invited to a Washingtonian's Home: When invited to a Washington party, divide your time wisely. (Important gatherings include Don and Joyce Rumsfeld's holiday party and any party thrown by conservative hostess Juleanna Glover Weiss.) Keep nonessential interactions brief, and position yourself so that your eyes can keep taking in other faces in the room. If a conversation partner is undermining your status, exit the dialogue quickly by greeting the nearest foreign ambassador. (Keep in mind that an ambassador should be only a temporary measure. Exceptions can be made for representatives from the coalition of the willing.) When greeting people, a generally acceptable phrase that does not require use of name is "nice to see you again." (Failure to have met previously is not a factor.) There is no shame in swarming around the food table.

E-mail Etiquette: You may enjoy e-mailing friends in Ohio, but natives in Washington will only look down on you or, worse, become

AVOIDING JOE WILSON

You needn't fear being gored by a charging rhino or mauled by an angry gorilla while in Washington, but the city does present certain natural hazards, so it would behoove you to be on the lookout for this man (see left). His primary habitats are the National Press Club and CNN's green room, although, when he isn't enjoying considerable media attention, he may be spotted at meetings of the College Democrats. If you encounter him, at all costs, do not let yourself get between him and a camera, a lectern, or a buffet, or you will likely be trampled. If, by some chance, he strikes up a conversation with you, try to make small talk. Suggested topics: his bravery and daring while serving in the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad before the first Gulf war; his masterful sleuthing for uranium in Niger; his gallantry in defending his wife; his brilliant thoughts on geopolitics; or his amazing and lustrous head of hair. As he talks (and talks and talks), scan the area for possible escape routes. Or create a diversion by pointing and saying, "It's Wolf Blitzer!" When he turns to look, flee. Do not—repeat: do not—ask him why, if his wife was once a covert CIA agent, he encouraged her to pose for a picture in *Vanity Fair*, or about the many inconsistent and outright false statements he has made to the press. This would only cause him to call you an "asshole," or, worse, threaten you with a "frogmarch."

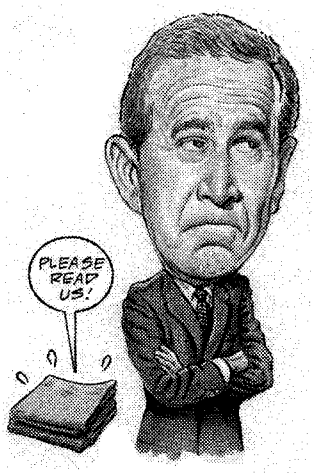
Charlie Palmer's by Charles Steck; party photo courtesy BuckMcKeon.com; caricatures by Drew Friedman

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

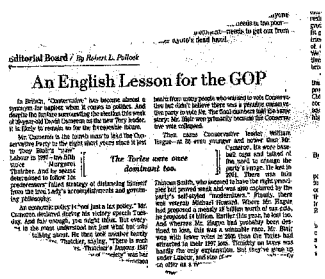
angry. If that mindset seems foreign to you, remember that you, too, would be unhappy to be professionally obliterated. Innocent e-mail messages like, "Can you let me know how much more (than the current +/-$660K) we would each score should Coushatta come through for this phase, and Choctaw continue to make the transfers," have caused even upstanding citizens like Jack Abramoff to look less than immaculate. Allusive writing is also out. On paper, no aspens should "turn in clusters, because their roots connect them." Save it for the visiting room.

Local Media

President Bush has boasted that he doesn't read the papers, preferring to get his news from "the people on my staff who tell me what's happening in the world." And where do these "objective sources," as Bush calls them, get their information? The same places most denizens of GOP D.C. do—from the universe of news organizations that serve the capital city, many of them tailored just to GOP D.C. Here's a guide to all the news that matters:



***The Wall Street Journal* Editorial Page:** Just as Soviet apparatchiks once devoured *Pravda*, Washington conservatives look to the *Journal* op-ed page for their latest marching orders. Want to know what to say about the Valerie Plame affair at this evening's cocktail party? Turn to the *Journal*, where you will learn that the only reason for this supposed scandal is that "we have an American left that hates George W. Bush ... so much that they have become willing dupes in a surreal operational stage-play."

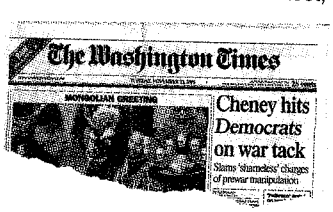

Editorial Board / by Robert L. Pollock

An English Lesson for the GOP

The Tories were once dominant too.

***The Weekly Standard*:** The *Standard* occasionally takes a break from planning the Fourth Infantry's march on Damascus to do yeoman's work defending Republicans in ethical hot water. Be sure to read one of the magazine's famous editorials railing against the phenomenon of "criminalizing conservatives" (a quaint Washington practice in which left-wing investigators and prosecutors allegedly score political points by indicting conservatives on trumped-up charges).

***The Washington Times*:** Sure, a paper owned by the cultish Reverend Sung Myung Moon sounds a little wacky, but Washington insiders know this broadsheet, which bills itself as "America's newspaper," possesses unique insights. Here you'll find the stories you'll see nowhere else: "ECONOMY'S WOES TIED TO CLINTON-ERA FISCAL ABUSES," "GOOD NEWS FROM IRAQ NOT REPORTED," and "FATHERS OF FAITH GIVE MORE TIME TO THEIR CHILDREN." Plus, the Redskins coverage is first-rate.


The Washington Times

MONGOLIAN GREETING

Cheney hits Democrats on war tack

Slams 'shameless' charges of prewar manipulation

***The Washington Post*:** Most residents of GOP D.C. only admit to reading "Washington's other paper" for the comics, but don't let them fool you. There are plenty of reasons Washingtonians will steal furtive glances between the pages of this venerable daily. The *Post*'s op-ed page is home to that paragon of journalistic virtue, Robert Novak. And the *Post* is the only place to look for behind-the-scenes reporting from White House stenographer Bob Woodward. Many say Woodward's illuminating accounts of Bush's steadfastness and decisiveness provide "a rough draft of history," untouched by liberal revisionists.

Fox News: In the evening, try putting your feet up and kicking back with Fox News—the closest thing GOP D.C. has to a collective id. Fox may be the local equivalent of the State Television found in China, Uzbekistan, and other parts of the not-there-yet-on-the-march-to-freedom world. But Fox, with its swoosh sound effects and blonde news readers, is far more watchable than its Eastern counterparts. After a few hours of viewing, you'll know that the real scandal has nothing to do with bribery or money-laundering and everything to do with the secular war on Christmas.

SO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO BE INDICTED . . .

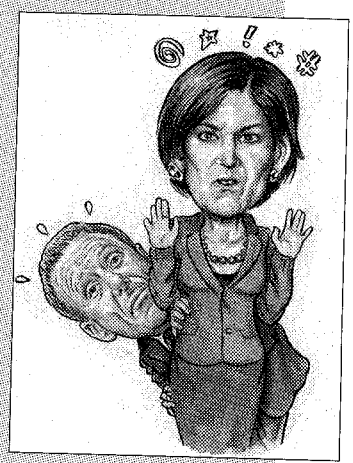
One of the hazards for out-of-towners visiting the nation's capital is the recent citywide outbreak of indictments. Criminal charges are being filed with such frequency that it's important to know what to do if you get mixed up in a local perjury or money-laundering case. Here are some tips from the pros:

1. Know the difference between being the *target* of an investigation and the *subject* of one. Use this simple mnemonic device: "Target could mean time, subject may be fine."

2. Use the underground entrance at the E. Barrett Prettyman federal courthouse. Your arrival for grand jury testimony doesn't have to be a public spectacle. Ask your presiding judge if you may use this discreet way into the building.

3. Transfer assets to your spouse or a trusted third party. Many Washington crimes these days involve large sums of money. Find a safe place for it before the government does. If there's no cash, there's no bribe.

4. Enlist surrogates, not a spokesman. If you anticipate that your alleged crime(s) will generate considerable press interest, consider enlisting surrogates to fight your cause. Today's cynical reporters dismiss spokesmen as hired guns. But nobody has to know the unpaid surrogate mounting an eloquent defense for you on "Hardball" is also in the tank.



5. Set up a legal defense fund. A trial is expensive! Why pay for it yourself? Your prosecutor may call it "bribery" or "obstruction of justice," but you'll find many eager check-writers who believe you are simply the victim of a political witch-hunt.

6. Smile! For Washington white-collar criminals, a smile is the new frown. Whether you're having a mug shot taken or entering a plea agreement in open court, be sure to flash a toothy grin. It can go a long way in disarming enemies that may seek to use your alleged crime(s) for political gain.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Useful Words and Phrases

GOP D.C. speaks a language that often resembles English, but the outsider should be mindful of special phrases and false cognates. Here are some rules to keep in mind.

"No" is frequently understood to be an abbreviation for "an assortment of" and is employed for the sake of concision.

Example: "I have done nothing wrong. I have violated no law, no regulation, no rule of the House." (Tom DeLay, September 28)

Understood as: "I have done an assortment of things wrong. I have violated an assortment of laws, an assortment of regulations, an assortment of rules of the House."

"Utterly false" can mean "true" or "false," depending on context, whereas "misleading" generally means "accurate" or "true."

Example: "[Bob Ney] would like nothing more than to put an end to the misleading reporting we have seen on the part of the inside-the-Beltway media." (spokesperson for Representative Bob Ney, December 15)

Understood as: "[Bob Ney] would like nothing more than to put an end to the accurate reporting we have seen on the part of the inside-the-Beltway media."

Legal difficulties are common but unpopular in GOP D.C. Phrasing should be suggestive rather than specific.

Example 1: "I have the facts, the law, and the truth on my side." (Tom DeLay, September 28)

Understood as: "I'm possibly going to jail."

Example 2: "The trip was exclusively personal; I did no business there . . . Jack is an old friend of mine." (Arrested Bush procurement official David Safavian, January 21)

Understood as: "I'm probably going to jail."

Example 3: "The time has come for me to conclude the public chapter of my life." (Representative Randy "Duke" Cunningham, July 14)

Understood as: "I'm definitely going to jail."

Special Words

"Kafkaesque"

Context: Jack Abramoff's description of his legal and professional woes.

Definition: Like something out of Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, except that the subject faces arrest for reasons that are clear, confronts a set of charges that are specific, enjoys a trial that is fair, and retains lawyers who are experienced in staving off verdicts that are deserved.

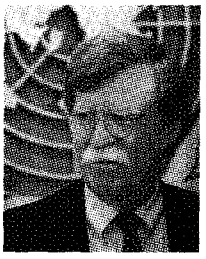
"Pending shitstorm"

Note on usage: Reserved for private settings. Publicly, GOP D.C. prefers the term "ongoing investigation," as in, "We are not going to get into commenting on it while it is an ongoing investigation." (White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan, July 11)

"A good man"

Definition: Anyone President George W. Bush appoints, or has ever appointed, to high office.

Examples: "As leader of HUD, Mel [Martinez] has repaid my confidence many times over. He is a good man." (George W. Bush, December 12, 2003); "[Energy Secretary nominee Sam Bodman] is a good man." (George W. Bush, December 10, 2004); "Across the nation, Americans have grown in respect and admiration for this good man [John Roberts]." (George W. Bush; September 29); "Take John Bolton—he's a good man." (George W. Bush, April 21)



"Activist judges"

Definition: Judges who strike down a law that GOP D.C. likes or uphold a law that GOP D.C. dislikes. (Also known as "judicial activists," "radical judges," "liberal-leftist judges," "the judicial oligarchy," "judicial usurpers," and "our robed masters.")

Examples: ***Wrong:*** "Senators who opposed the nomination did so because Priscilla Owen's record shows her to be an ends-oriented activist judge." (Patrick Leahy, April 21) ***Right:*** "I don't believe in liberal, activist judges." (George W. Bush, October 30, 2000)

GOP D.C. Walking Tour:

This three-hour tour of Washington's main hubs of corruption will take you from K Street to the White House to Capitol Hill. You will walk in the shadow of the city's greatest monuments and stroll down Pierre L'Enfant's most famous boulevards, all the while soaking up valuable lessons about modern democracy and the inner workings of America's (second) oldest political party. Wear a comfortable pair of shoes and a sense of outrage.

Start by strolling along historic K Street until you reach the corner of 30th Street NW. All around you, what seem like ordinary office buildings are actually the workplaces of the guardians of one of the five freedoms guaranteed by our First Amendment: the right to petition our government. At 3000 K Street is the **Alexander Strategy Group** (ASG), one of the most successful government petitioners in the United States. ASG, home to several of Tom DeLay's former aides and the onetime employer of DeLay's wife, built its business through a collaborative relationship with Jack Abramoff. Together, they helped entities that have historically been underrepresented here in Washington—like the Choctaw Indians, Malaysian business interests, and Internet gambling sites—present their cases to Congress. The Justice Department is now investigating some of these petitioning activities, so you'll want to step around any yellow police tape obstructing the sidewalk in front of the building.

Now walk east along K Street and make a left at 19th Street. At 1920 L Street NW is **Americans for Tax Reform.** Ask Grover Norquist, the jovial and bearded proprietor of this establishment, to tell you some of his war stories about fighting communists during the height of the cold war or opening doors on Capitol Hill for Abramoff clients during the height of the Republican revolution. Note the photo of Norquist brandishing a Kalashnikov in Peshawar during the 1980s. Best not to ask why he never made it into Afghanistan.

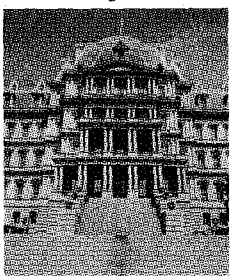
Time for a coffee break. Head south on 19th Street and take a left on Pennsylvania Avenue, then walk until you find the **Starbucks** at 1730. This isn't any Starbucks. This is the very shop where Michael Gerson has written many of the president's speeches. Gerson won't say, but local legend has it that it was on the caramel

Ney by Chris Maddaloni/Newscom; Kafka (no credit); Bolton by Mike Segar/Reuters/Newscom; Starbucks by Brian Hagiwara/NewsCom; Libby by Larry Downing/Reuters/Newscom; Old Executive Office Building by Index Stock Imagery/Newscom; Safavian by Melina Mara, *The Washington Post*; Novak by Tim Sloan/AFP/Getty Images/NewsCom

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

macchiato–stained armchair in the back corner that he penned some of Bush's most historic statements: "By the year 2042, the entire [Social Security] system would be exhausted and bankrupt" and "the British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."

When you exit the Starbucks, the enormous Second Empire–style structure before you is the **Old Executive Office Building.** It was here that David Safavian served the United States as its chief procurement officer, the official in charge of all government buying. He abruptly resigned three days before being arrested and later charged with lying and obstruction of justice, an event that earned him the distinction of becoming the first criminal defendant in the Abramoff corruption scandal.



When you're done waiting for the next White House employee to be led out in chains, continue down Pennsylvania Avenue toward the White House. You are walking the route that became the epicenter of Washington's greatest drama—the famous **spot where a friend of Joseph Wilson's bumped into Robert Novak** on July 8, 2003. It was here, as the two men strolled down the avenue, that Novak told Wilson's friend that he knew that Wilson's wife worked at the CIA, a fact the friend immediately relayed to Wilson, causing the former ambassador to call Novak and berate him for sharing such information with a stranger on the street, inadvertently confirming the fact for Novak and assuring the writer would report it in his column six days later, launching PlameGate.

When you've shaken off the sense of awe (or confusion), continue southeast along Pennsylvania Avenue until you reach Constitution Avenue. Everyone knows how a bill becomes a law, but what happens to a public official when he gets arrested? Well, let's find out! On your left, at 333, is the **E. Barrett Prettyman United States Courthouse.** In the old Washington, much of the nation's business took place in Congress and at the White House. Today, Prettyman Courthouse is the center of the action. It's here that grand juries indict federal officials; where material witnesses come to testify; where the accused enter their guilty pleas. The best time to visit has traditionally been Wednesdays or Fridays, when the Plame grand jury met. Grab a notebook, jump into the press scrum, and shout a question to the indictee of the day as he's hustled into a sedan!

Now head toward the Capitol grounds. Follow the ten-foot barrier surrounding the people's house counterclockwise and turn right at First Street SE. See that white brick building down the street at 310 First Street? That's the **Republican National Committee** (RNC), home to the party of Abe Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, and Tom DeLay. It was here that a check for $190,000 in corporate contributions from a DeLay-created committee landed in the fall of 2002. And it was from this very site that the RNC sent the same amount back to seven Texas House candidates whose subsequent victories helped the state's Republicans rewrite district boundaries and expand the GOP majority. A Texas prosecutor called this money-laundering and indicted DeLay. You can inquire inside about volunteering for similar party-building activities.

We know what you're thinking right about now—GOP D.C. is a snooze! Aren't there sex scandals anymore? There are! Continue walking down C Street and turn left at the next block. Before you, at 110 D Street SE, stands our final stop—"**Hill House**," the dorm-like home to many members of Congress. Climb the stairs to the second floor and find apartment 215. It was here that GOP Representative Don Sherwood allegedly choked his 29-year-old Peruvian-born mistress. They settled her $5.5 million assault-and-battery suit out of court for an undisclosed sum. We recommend that female travelers don't linger for too long, however, as he's running for reelection in 2006.

Suggested Reading for Travelers

You may wish to learn more about GOP D.C. We recommend the following books:

Thoughts on Machiavelli, by Leo Strauss. A great introduction to politics, by and about two of Washington's favorite philosophers.

The Virtue of Selfishness, by Ayn Rand. Some basic knowledge of Rand's theory of objectivism will help you understand how the town works, and familiarity with her concept of "rational selfishness" can offer a nifty ideological fig leaf if you happen to get swept up in your own Washington corruption scandal.

The Body Politic, by Lynne Cheney and Victor Gold. This zany novel tells the improbable story of a vice president who dies of a heart attack and a White House that engages in a criminal conspiracy to cover it up.

The Apprentice, by I. Lewis Libby. Before being indicted for perjury and obstruction of justice, Libby was a top White House official, steering the country toward confrontation with Iraq and helping craft America's new torture and detention policies. Before that, he wrote this delightful novel featuring bestiality with a bear and a deer.

Rebel in Chief: Inside the Bold and Controversial Presidency of George W. Bush, by Fred Barnes. This promises to be the most worshipful of a recent burst of Bush hagiographies. It is helpful less for its purported insider details about the White House than for its understanding of the customs and techniques of the capital's conservative press.

House Ethics Manual, by the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct. Last revised in 1992, this quaint book of congressional rules and regulations serves as a sort of time capsule from a more innocent era.

Behind Bars: Surviving Prison, by Jeffrey Ian Ross and Stephen C. Richards. Written by a former correctional officer and an ex-con, the book has everything you need to know if arrested—from proper etiquette during booking to understanding why you may prefer serving in a federal prison rather than a state one.

THE ROUGH GUIDE TO GOP D.C. was written by Jonathan Chait, Michael Crowley, Franklin Foer, T. A. Frank, Ryan Lizza, and Jason Zengerle.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Altered States

THIS IS SEX-CHANGE WEEK. First comes **TRANSAMERICA**. Clad in the simplified garb of the independent film—small cast, no cinematic panoply—it relies on its truth, and it succeeds, despite its central idea. When that idea becomes clear, our teeth grind at the approach of a gimmick. But the idea is treated with such concern that the film converts into an affecting oddity.

TRANSAMERICA
(Weinstein Company)

BREAKFAST ON PLUTO
(Sony Pictures Classics)

Stanley, a fortyish Los Angeles male, dresses in drag and calls himself Bree. He is scheduled for a transsexual operation. (Thus, technically, he is not a transvestite but a pre-operative transsexual.) Suddenly he gets a call from the New York police that his teenage son is in trouble, for hustling and drug-dealing. The son, Toby, is the fruit of Bree's one long-forgotten encounter as a male. Bree's therapist says that the operation must be postponed until Bree's relationship with Toby is settled. He goes to New York and bails out his son—for one dollar. Bree is not able emotionally to divulge his paternity to Toby, who happens to be fiendishly handsome and complacently amoral. Bree poses as a Christian missionary who will re-unite Toby with his stepfather in Kentucky. Bree buys a used car, and they start. It doesn't take much foresight to predict that the journey will not end there. After a jarring encounter in Kentucky with the stepfather, Bree and Toby journey west together. (Toby doesn't much care where he is or goes.)

The crossing of America by car, which gives this film its wordplay title, has become a staple device at least since *Lolita*. Here the trip resembles a bathysphere experience, confined and close, in the middle of geographic immensity. Nonetheless they encounter all kinds of people, music, motels. Somewhere west of the Mississippi a thief steals their car, with Bree's pocketbook in it, and, unknown to Bree, Toby turns a trick to get some cash. They then visit Bree's stuffy parents who live en route and are not happy about their son. However, the parents provide some money. Bree and Toby get to the coast, Toby learns the truth about the "missionary," and eruptions follow. Bree has the operation and is delighted, and the finish looms accommodatingly.

The real success of Duncan Tucker, who wrote and directed this debut feature, is that, through credible dialogue and sensitive performances, the basic idea overcomes its cleverness and is affecting. *Transamerica* cannot rely on commonality. How many in its potential audience are or have known drag-dressed males who conceal their paternity from their sons? Of course thousands of films that are distant in character and setting manage to touch us because we can share the experiences, or wish we could. But how many of us—at the start of the *Transamerica*, anyway—can think of ourselves as sharing the relationship of Bree and Toby?

The surprise is that this sharing occurs. Felicity Huffman, a woman playing a pseudo-woman until she becomes a real one, creates Bree so poignantly that she does more than make us understand: she makes us care. Kevin Zegers, as Toby, is wonderful to look at and agreeably gifted—and is possibly at the start of a considerable career. Bree's parents are made vivid by the stolid Burt Young and the accomplished Fionnula Flanagan. There is a risk of patronizing *Transamerica*—a pat on the head because it is better than expected—but that risk fades through the film's quality.

Next is **BREAKFAST ON PLUTO**, which in some ways is the reverse of *Transamerica*. The central character is a (true) transvestite, and this film, far from low-budget austerity, is lush, with a large cast and extravagant cinematic effects. Those facts, plus the title, might suggest that this is a sci-fi story. Far from it. The title is a phrase from a song about a fantasy journey through the heavens, and it fits because this is the account of a fantasist who seems to live in an interior heaven.

Once again the film's strength is the force and the vulnerability of the leading actor. Cillian Murphy plays Patrick who, as a baby, was left on a doorstep in an Irish village. He grows up a transvestite, loves being one, and, unlike Bree, wants to remain one. He calls himself Kitten and flounces. He comes in for a lot of jeering and beating, especially in his strict Catholic high school, but nothing dissuades him. He almost seems to be proving courage by insisting on being a transvestite—and gay.

Kitten sets out for London to find his mother, without much of a clue about her whereabouts. But he lives his whole life that way. His map and his compass are the opportunities that happen to come along: his general air is of nonchalance and tolerance and a kind of innocence. All through his journey, which includes a ride on a pop group's bus, his accidental involvement in IRA action (this is back in Thatcher times), his stooging for a magic act, his presence at a bombing in a London nightclub, Kitten's realm of unreality is preserved. After the bombing he is arrested because he was the only Irishman there. The police beat him up, trying to get him to confess, and he doesn't protest—he even manages to be affectionate toward the cops. It is not masochism: it is the perseverance of his fantasy life even when he is suffering.

We see this fantasizing early. In school his class is asked to write a story, and we see the wild tale that Kitten imagines. There is a huge fire at one point, and it may or may not be only Kitten's imagining. In some sense, though other characters have minds of their own, the whole film seems to be taking place in Kitten's head.

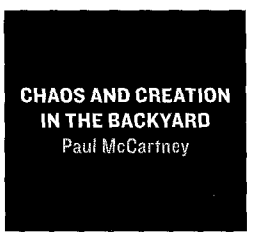
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The director is Neil Jordan, who made *The Crying Game*, another moving story about a transvestite. Jordan adapted the screenplay of *Breakfast on Pluto* with Patrick McCabe from McCabe's novel. At the beginning and end, and both of them are tipped a bit with Kitten's fantasy, a pair of sparrows chirp at each other, with subtitles translating their chirps. In the main, however, Jordan has created the right texture for the film—with sweeping montages, odd shots (like one through a neon sign), and music that ranges from Purcell to rock. The result is a sort of kaleidoscopic whirl. He is aided by a sturdy cast. The stalwart Liam Neeson is a village priest who is more than a priest. Stephen Rea adds droll flavor with his portrait of a professional magician. Still, as in *Transamerica*, it is the central performance that holds us. Cillian Murphy glows. ■

David Hajdu on Music

McCartney III

The last time Paul McCartney made an album in the vein of his latest CD, *Chaos and Creation in the Backyard*, John Lennon was alive to hear it. McCartney had just cast off Wings, the notoriously ephemeral quasi-band comprising his blithe novice-musician wife, Linda, and their loyal mate Denny Laine (augmented on some records by a floating assortment of players varying in ability) after nine years, ten LPs, and countless critical gibes at the slyly criticism-proof "Silly Love Songs." With the benefit of nine days of stock-taking in a Tokyo jail on a charge of marijuana possession, McCartney retrenched; he re-grouped without a group, playing all the instruments on an album called *McCartney II* in 1980. "He sounds depressed," Lennon told a writer for *Playboy* not long before he was murdered twenty-five years ago this month. Indeed, with the exception of the intricate, bouncy single "Coming Up" and the grating "Temporary Secretary," most of the songs on the record were startlingly, uncharacteristically, almost refreshingly lugubrious and dull. McCartney was ready to re-claim his musical identity, if only he could find it.

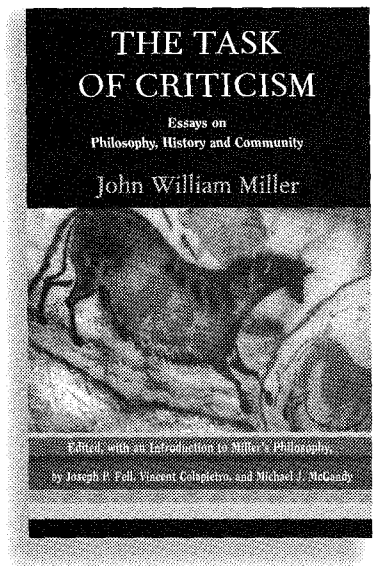


The album was a titular sequel to his first solo venture, made ten years earlier, immediately after McCartney had left his previous band. *McCartney*, much like the records John Lennon, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr each made immediately after the Beatles disbanded, was an act of purging. Yet unlike Lennon's *Plastic Ono Band* (a Janovian scream of self-defined genius in pain), Harrison's *All Things Must Pass* (a creative awakening in the name of pop mysticism), and Starr's *Sentimental Journey* (an outrageous attempt to croon standards, with some elegant arrangements by Oliver Nelson and Chico O'Farrell), *McCartney* was less an effort to establish an individual identity as it was an attempt to purge the Beatles of its group identity. *I don't need those other three (nor anyone else besides my wife)*, McCartney seemed to be saying. *I can do it all, just as well, by myself, in the backyard of my estate in Scotland.* The album was something of a cheat: supposedly home-made on lo-fi equipment, it was only partly so. Several of the most striking tracks, including "Maybe I'm Amazed," "Junk," and "Every Night," were recorded in secrecy, over time, in top London studios, and the best songs ("Junk" and "Teddy Boy") had been composed years earlier, with the Beatles in mind.

Still, *McCartney* was impressive and appealing. It was also flawed by an excess of fragmentary, slipshod tracks—harbingers of Paul's long solo career. By making proudly Beatles-esque music all by himself, writing every word and playing and singing virtually every note (Linda contributed some background vocals, though not many notes), McCartney shook off Lennon, Harrison, and Starr to try to prove that what remained without them, Paul McCartney, *was* the

"A marvelously rich introduction to Miller's life work."
– John Lachs, author of
The Relevance of Philosophy for Life

A new chapter in American thought, Miller's approach embraces history, revitalizes critique, and joins reflection with participation in a democratic community.



"An outstanding collection!"
– John J. Stuhr,
author of *Pragmatism, Postmodernism and the Future of Philosophy*

"Combines the insights of three excellent scholars with the philosophical corpus of a philosopher whose originality and importance have long been overlooked."
– Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr.,
founding and senior consulting editor
of *The Works of George Santayana*

Wherever books are sold
W. W. Norton
Independent publishers since 1923
www.wwnorton.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Beatles. By simultaneously corrupting the effort, mingling the sophisticated, burnished moments with others of maladroit noodling, he laid claim both to the esteem of the Beatles' achievements and to the license to coast off them as he chose.

THE NEW CD IS, ESSENTIALLY, *McCartney III*. It brings McCartney playing nearly all the instruments—various guitars, piano, organ, bass, drums, miscellaneous percussion, autoharp, recorder, even cello, flugelhorn, and toy glockenspiel. (Several tracks have additional string and brass sections, and a few guest soloists handle specialty instruments such as the duduk, an Armenian woodwind.) As with *McCartney* and *McCartney II*, this effort is an attempt at re-definition—in this case, a clarification of McCartney's creative identity after more than a decade of diffusive fiddling, sidesteps, dalliances, and half-hearted experiments. For his previous album, released four years ago, McCartney wrote the songs hastily, in some cases finishing them in the studio, and he recorded the music with unfamiliar young studio musicians under Los Angeles producer David Kahne. The result, *Driving Rain*, was even weaker, more scattershot than his preceding recording of original material, *Flaming Pie*, from 1997, a toy chest full of colorful, misshapen playthings, including two songs written while they were being recorded: a duet with Steve Miller and a nonsense riff called "Really Love You," co-credited to Ringo because he supplied the backbeat. McCartney explained that working on the Beatles' *Anthology* of obscurities had inspired him to make *Flaming Pie*, which not only derived its named from a vintage bon mot by John Lennon but whose music sounds very much like Beatles rejects, demos, and outtakes. (They were nominally improved by Jeff Lynne, their producer, who tried brushing the album with that metallic ELO sound.) Both records had notable high points, though: *Driving Rain*'s "She's Given Up Talking," a cryptic story-song, and *Flaming Pie*'s "Calico Skies" and "Heaven on a Sunday," a pair of lovely ballads.

Between the two albums, in 1998, McCartney lost his wife to cancer and wrestled with the grief, recording a raw, bleak album of early rock and roll numbers (and a few originals in their style) with a tight little pick-up band. Named *Run Devil Run* for a sign that he saw on a New Orleans drug store, the record is a small triumph, but it is essentially not Paul McCartney music. A month later, he released a collection of short pieces in the classical mode, *Working Classical*, his third CD of concert music, following the well-meaning work of apprenticeship, "Liverpool Oratorio" in 1991, and the overwrought "Standing Stone" six years later. Like every one of his pop albums, including the worst, *Working Classical* is, by turns, uncommonly tuneful and pleasant (most notably in a pair of sweet, pretty tone poems, "A Leaf" and "Spiral") and numbingly trite (as in the string-quartet versions of "My Love" and "Lovely Linda").

He sees every musical venture as a rail journey, McCartney explained in a recent interview to promote *Chaos and Creation in the Backyard*. "It's like sort of stepping on a train," he said. "I don't worry about other trains I've been on, just this new train, and that's exciting. You just have to realize that perhaps you can't always have as great a journey as you had in the past." Of course, riding a locomotive is a passive experience. It is not much like the active and often arduous creative processes that composers and musicians typically describe. If McCartney thinks of himself as a mere passenger in the course of his work, one wonders: who, then, is steering? Who, or what, is running the engine? His producer? His collaborators? His audience? Each of them influences him, sometimes mightily. But the primary traits of his music—its casualness, its buoyancy, its disarming juvenility, its caprice, its wild unevenness in quality—suggest that McCartney tends to entrust his destiny to only one driver: himself. His own talent took him so far for so long that he has become content to go along for the ride.

For *Chaos and Creation in the Backyard*, McCartney hired the producer Nigel Godrich, because he liked the textured clarity of the albums that Godrich recorded for Radiohead, Travis, and Beck. It was Godrich who persuaded McCartney to avoid his penchant for winging it, in a phrase, and urged him to pare down, to concentrate on song craft, to play as many instruments as possible himself, to re-claim his musical personality. "He wanted to keep it really simple, really straight, really direct and very me instead of 'Let's get modern, let's get gimmicky' or 'Let's do this because it's the latest groove,'" McCartney said. The album succeeds at that: it has a plaintive, organic feeling. The songs, all but one of which are mid-tempo ballads, flow smoothly and have affecting, simple melodies. There is less filler than usual for McCartney—only "Friends to Go" (a song about wanting people to leave the house, "Let 'Em In" reversed) and "Follow Me" (which says that and little more) are outright throwaways. There are three treats—"Fine Line" (the single, and vintage McCartney pop), "Jenny Wren" (a lyrical folkish number, a close cousin to "Blackbird," inspired by the Dickens character from *Our Mutual Friend*), and "Riding to Vanity Fair" (Paul in a petulant, arty mode). The rest of the music—eight more songs, plus a "bonus" instrumental jam (McCartney having fun with himself) tacked on at the end but not listed on the credits—is quite good, but hardly exceptional; catchy, but not memorable. On the whole, the album has the confidence and the veracity missing from *McCartney II*, but it falls far short of *McCartney* in both chaos and creation.

UNCOMMONLY DEFT AS A MUSICIAN, McCartney has played multiple instruments since he was a Beatle and overdubbed all the parts to "Why Don't We Do It in the Road?" In fact, he worked alone to make a few of the most durable recordings of his Wings and solo years—"Oh Woman, Oh Why" (the superior flip side to his first post-Beatles single, "Another Day"), "Arrow Through Me" (credited to Wings in 1979), and "Return to Pepperland" (recorded for an album intended to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, in 1987, but never issued commercially), as well as two CDs of techno experiments that he released in the 1990s under the pseudonym the Fireman. Still, as *Chaos and Creation in the Backyard* reminds us, assuming responsibility for the whole has a way of diminishing McCartney's commitment to each part. In the Beatles, his playing was frequently most inventive when his role on a track was limited, as in his bass lines on George Harrison's "Something" and "Old Brown Shoe," his drumming on John Lennon's "Dear Prudence," and his electric guitar solo on Harrison's "Taxman." The musicianship on *Chaos and Creation* is merely functional—dazzling only in concept, only if you read the credits. Unless the music works as well as that of a group with more than

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one member (as some past McCartney efforts have), the one-man-band scheme is a banal gimmick, anyway. An application of the King Buffet aesthetic, it measures value by quantity—by all you can play, not by how good any of it is.

The ego at the heart of every do-it-all act was already rife for parody in 1921, when Buster Keaton (a cinematic multi-hyphenate himself) directed *The Playhouse*, a stunning silent short (intended to be accompanied by live music) that shows a stage full of performers, all portrayed by Keaton (thanks to a special effect executed by rewinding a hand-cranked camera, removing strips of tape from the lens, one by one, and exposing the film multiple times). "This Keaton fellow seems to be the whole show," jokes a character, through a title card. Six decades later, McCartney made a music video presenting himself playing all the instruments on "Coming Up," an update of *The Playhouse* done with a blue screen and no irony. A promotional documentary DVD packaged in a special edition of the *Chaos and Creation* dispenses with the effects, but fixes on McCartney's versatility, cross-cutting scenes of him at the grand piano, him strumming his guitar, him behind the drum kit—making clear the message that the fellow is the whole show.

THIS MANDARIN IDEALIZATION of music-making as craft marks a fall from the elevated place to which McCartney helped to bring pop music as a Beatle. While many of the Beatles recordings were multi-tracked, performed by only one or two members of the band ("The Ballad of John and Yoko," for instance, has only John and Paul playing all the instruments), they were done in the larger context of an approach that challenged the rock audience to think of music as an expression of creative intelligence rather than an exercise in technique. "Yesterday" features only one Beatle, Paul, and a string quartet; "Revolution #9" is an aural montage of found-object recordings; "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite" has a tape of a calliope cut apart and re-arranged—yet their fans came to understand this work as Beatles music, because the band members were the source of its ideas, whether or not they had their hands on the instruments or used conventional instruments at all.

Despite its Grammy nomination for album of the year, *Chaos and Creation in the Backyard* disappoints, as much of McCartney's solo music does, because it is good and not great; that is, it fails to meet the standard McCartney established for his own work some forty years ago. Asked about "Yesterday" in an interview with Robert Shelton, Bob Dylan remarked that "if you go into the Library of Congress, you can find—there are millions of songs like that written in Tin Pan Alley." John Lennon, asked late in his life about the same song, said, "Wow, that was a good 'un!" Both of them were correct. "Yesterday" is indeed like millions of older songs in kind, but it is also superior to a great many in quality. McCartney is a genre composer, as Irving Berlin was; and at his best, as a Beatle, McCartney drew upon a handful of compositional models to create exemplary specimens in his own voice—the musical-hall tune ("When I'm Sixty Four," "Honey Pie"), the screeching rocker ("I'm Down," "Helter Skelter"), the love ballad ("Yesterday," "Michelle," "The Long and Winding Road"), the folk ditty ("Mother Nature's Son," "Two of Us"), and more. This is not to say that he was incapable of breaking ground as a composer; he could and did in the Beatles (his conception for *Sgt. Pepper's*, his work on the medley on *Abbey Road*) and occasionally in his solo work ("Talk More Talk" and "Pretty Little Head" from *Press to Play*, the Fireman albums). For the most part, though, Lennon's specialty was invention, and McCartney's was refinement. In the 1960s, McCartney stood as the postwar generation's defense against the then-vociferous attacks on the ostensible inadequacies of rock songwriters. Even those of us who preferred Lennon and considered his music more important could hold up Paul and say, *Look, here's one of ours, and he's as good as Irving Berlin*. It remains difficult to accept that as a delusion when, with every new album, McCartney taunts us with snippets of charming melody and, sometimes, even a clever turn of phrase.

I have met Paul McCartney a couple of times, and we once spent a good deal of an evening together—on September 10, 2001, not that the date meant a thing to us then. We talked for a while about his father, an amateur musician, and about his childhood in Liverpool. I was taken aback to find that McCartney, one of the most successful men in the world, still liked to think of himself as working class (or wanted to be thought of as such). There is no doubt an element of blue-collar pride in the populism that infuses his music. At the same time, much of what he does is, in a way, a betrayal of his class. McCartney was granted an extraordinary musical gift—as an artist, he was born into privilege, and for most of his solo career, he has simply glided along, exploiting that entitlement without exerting much effort. He always been busy and productive, but he just doesn't work hard enough. ■

James Wood

God's Dictionary

MELVILLE: HIS WORLD AND WORK
By Andrew Delbanco
(Knopf, 415 pp., $30)

I.

IN THE GONCOURT JOURNALS, Flaubert is reported as telling the tale of a man taken fishing by an atheist friend. The atheist casts the net and draws up a stone on which is carved: "I do not exist. *Signed*: God." And the atheist exclaims: "What did I tell you!" Flaubert, the bitter master of nullification, enjoyed these kinds of jokes: in his world, atheism is as much of a received idea, as much of a platitude, as theism. Melville, writing at the same time as Flaubert, and most fertile in the same decade as the French writer (the 1850s), had no comparable worldly ease. Indeed, he may be seen as less the knowing teller of Flaubert's joke than its butt. For Melville was trapped in the self-arrest of the atheist believer: his negations merely confirmed God's tormenting existence.

Melville was not so much a God-doubter as a God-hater. Most people, he wrote to Hawthorne, "fear God, and *at bottom dislike* Him ... You perceive I employ a capital initial in the pronoun

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

referring to the Deity; don't you think there is a slight dash of flunkeyism in that usage?" When he traveled to Egypt in 1857, he was horrified by the theological shadow cast by the Pyramids: "it was in these pyramids," he shudders, "that was conceived the idea of Jehovah." But he was repeating himself; he had already explored the metaphor of the pyramid. In his novel *Pierre*, in 1852, he had written that "Silence" is the "only Voice of our God ... By vast pains we mine into the pyramids; by horrible gropings we come to the central room; with joy we espy the sarcophagus; but we lift the lid—and no body is there!—appallingly vacant as vast is the soul of man!" And the great white whale Moby-Dick, with "his pyramidical silence" is, among the many meanings inscribed on his massively allegorical form, the noisily silent God of the Book of Job, the Leviathan who will not be drawn out with a hook, who roars and thunders and bullies and commands, but who never answers the question: "Why, Lord?"

FOR THOSE WHO FEEL THAT THIS pyramidical silence is the void around which Melville's life swirled, most critical and biographical accounts of the writer seem too mildly to disperse their emphases—there is, nowadays, Melville the homoerotic who wrote *Billy Budd*, Melville the analyst of race who wrote *Benito Cereno*, Melville the quasi-Marxist who created that great refuser of capitalist obligation, Bartleby, and who saw, in his last novel, *The Confidence-Man*, that the engine of American economic life was tricksterism. Hershel Parker, in his massive two-volume biography, mentions that Melville was descended from stern Calvinists, only to dilute that sternness in a comment like this: "Original Sin had not become an outmoded theological conceit in Maria Melville's house, and till his death her second son [Herman] had to resort to that concept, at times, to make sense of the world." The truer comment would be that Melville had great difficulty making sense of the world precisely because the notion of Original Sin shadowed it. Laurie Robertson-Lorant, in her biography, is even more insouciant: "Although he rejected both his mother's Calvinism and his father's Unitarianism, he was a deeply spiritual man. He attended church voluntarily on occasion, and he lamented the collapse of a central core of religious faith as much as he dreaded religious fanaticism and repressive orthodoxy." This easy liberal might almost be Henry James, for all one would know; the description carries no scent of the Melvillean desperation. And what, exactly, is "a deeply spiritual man"?

In his new biography, Andrew Delbanco, the author of *The Puritan Ordeal* and *The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil*, is a good deal more blunt than either Parker or Robertson-Lorant. Delbanco's Melville doubted the existence of God, but "never stopped looking for traces of God." He is "a fellow traveler in our post-theistic world." Quoting the passage from *Pierre* about the empty sarcophagus, Delbanco rightly comments that it encodes "an antic, even cruel view of man driving himself through an arduous quest only to discover at the climactic moment that in fact there is nothing to be unearthed—nothing but more mud, rock, and dust—and that the self, like the universe, is devoid of meaning except for the meanings we project into it for the sake of reassuring ourselves." Indeed, Delbanco's sense of Melville's theological skepticism may even exceed Melville's own terror.

Delbanco the professor of literature is interested, of course, in all the ways that the twentieth century has read Melville, and he provides acute, sometimes brilliant, summations of the latest work on Melville and race, Melville and despotism, Melville and Freud, Melville and deconstruction. But Delbanco is a fine historian as well as a fine critic, and his primary task is to provide an account of Melville's "world" as well as of his work. Not surprisingly, in Melville's world, rather than ours, the question of the *deus absconditus* could never be easily dispersed or casually smothered.

MELVILLE'S RISE AND FALL is the great story of American genius discovering itself and then going undiscovered. *Moby-Dick*, which received mixed reviews when it appeared in 1851, finally went out of print in 1887, having sold all of 3,180 copies, and it was not until the 1920s that the Melville revival began in earnest. Delbanco notes that so obscure was Melville in his later years that Henry James mentioned him only once in his critical work, as part of a group of writers connected to *Putnam's* magazine. Melville's slow decline began in the late 1850s, and it received confirmation, as it were, in his decision in 1866 to sign on for what Delbanco calls "a four-dollar-a-day, six-day-a-week job" as Deputy Inspector No. 75 of the United States Custom Service.

Nothing would have seemed less predictable when Herman Melville was born, in 1819, into the comfortable upper classes of New York City. One of his grandfathers, Peter Gansevoort, was a hero of the Revolutionary War; on his father's side, the Melvills, as they were then called, were distantly related to Scottish noblemen. (Delbanco slips when he makes the Melvill clan English rather than Scottish.) But Melville's father, an optimistic and unsuccessful businessman, went through the family's money and died in debt when Herman was twelve, and the little boy was removed from school and sent to work in a bank.

Eight years later, Melville escaped these straitened circumstances by going to sea on a whaling ship. It was an escape and an imprisonment: he became famous as a writer of sea-yarns—*Typee*, in 1846, his first, was his most celebrated, since it narrated his escapades among the cannibals in Polynesia—and *Moby-Dick*, a self-unraveling sea yarn if ever there was one, confused its eager readers and critics. One of Melville's early literary patrons and correspondents, Evert Duyckinck, likened it to a kind of "intellectual chowder," and wanly recommended the book for offering "some very strange, romantic, and withal, highly humorous adventures at New Bedford and Nantucket."

With subtle pacing, Delbanco expertly elongates the fevered apprenticeship of the years leading to *Moby-Dick*. These years are better documented than any others in Melville's life, for he was using his correspondence as soul-combustion, tossing out in his letters ideas, ambitions, piratical yearnings for greatness, theological riffs, stormy surmises. He was a young man, in his late twenties only, when he began the great assault. Parker, by sheer bloat of detail, is a little more helpful than Delbanco here, because he tells us exactly what Melville was reading, often for the first time, and when: Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* in February 1848; Thomas Browne in March of the same year; in 1849 Pierre Bayle's deeply skeptical *Historical and Critical Dictionary*; and above all Shakespeare, in 1848 and 1849. He could not believe that he had lived so long without properly appreciating Shakespeare. Shake-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

speare seemed a God-like figure to him. From this bulging list, Delbanco subtly selects the *Aeneid*, whose influence can be felt throughout *Moby-Dick*, and *Frankenstein*, a novel in which the eponymous scientist, Ahab-like, hunts the wandering monster that he has created. "Having tracked the creature to the icy North," adds Delbano, "Frankenstein commandeers a scientific expeditionary ship headed to the Arctic and turns it into an instrument of his private vengeance."

In 1850, Melville met Hawthorne, and the friendship, knotted of admiration and rivalry, seems to have whipped Melville into writing. After two years of almost manic ingestion of book after book—Montaigne, Milton, Seneca, Dante—he began to write *Moby-Dick*. He started in February 1850, sped up after encountering Hawthorne in the summer, and by December of that year was racing, urging Duyckinck to "send me about fifty fast-writing youths." He was afloat on words and heretical ideas. Breathlessly, he wrote to Hawthorne: "I feel that the Godhead is broken up like the bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces. Hence this infinite fraternity of feeling." By the end of the summer of 1851, he had finished the big book.

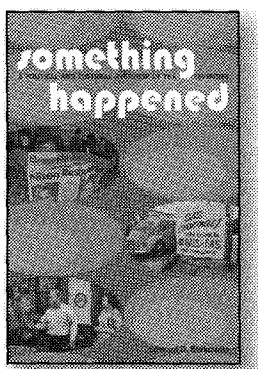
Moby-Dick's unsonorous reception was an enormous blow to Melville, and he followed it with his famously impacted and angry novel, *Pierre*. In that book, Pierre is described as a man possessed by Calvinism, the branch of Protestantism most given to notions of predestination and most hostile to our ability to affect what we do—"that most true Christian doctrine of the utter nothingness of good works," as Melville puts it. But it might also be a description of the book itself, which seems calculated to affront and to frustrate, to wave its bewildering nothingness in front of the enraged reader. Delbanco tells us that when it was published *The New York Day Book* viewed it under the headline "HERMAN MELVILLE CRAZY."

In the next few years, Melville wrote his great stories "Barteleby, the Scrivener" and *Benito Cereno*, and Delbanco's historical and cultural commentary is especially subtle. He points out that although *Benito Cereno*, an intensely gripping tale of slaves mutinying on a ship and taking the white captain hostage, is now generally read nude of context, usually in anthologies of "Great Short Fiction," its original appearance "was in a partisan magazine committed to the anti-slavery cause." Likewise, with "Bartleby," Delbanco nimbly re-inserts the story into the world of mid-nineteenth-century American capitalism. Early in his biography, he calls Melville an American Dostoevsky and then rather drops the connection, but his comparison is striking: Ahab, with his endless feud and self-pluming pride, might well be seen as a character out of Dostoevsky, an American representative of what Nietzsche called *ressentiment*; Bartleby, with his refrain of "I would prefer not to," is surely an American Underground Man. And both writers were deeply interested in suffering, in theodicy, and in martyrdom: *Billy Budd* is the great story of innocence sacrificed on the altar of spite and law.

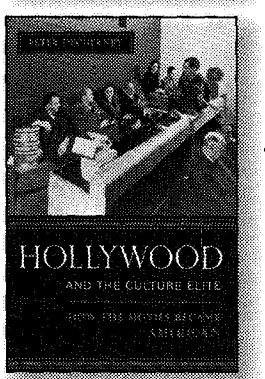
Throughout the book there emerges, despite the collegial pastels which Delbanco gently uses, a vivid portrait, notably well-written, of a tormented manic-depressive and heavy drinker. He was a stranger to the notion of clean linen, said Hawthorne, and ate his food, says Delbanco, in a nice phrase, with "canine urgency." As he grew older, and more withdrawn from writing and the literary world, so there were "bursts of nervous anger and attacks of morose conscience." His wife's friends feared for her safety at times, and for her happiness. His son, Malcolm, committed suicide at the age of eighteen. Perhaps the saddest vignette in this masterful biography concerns Melville's attempt, between 1857 and 1860, to make a living as a public speaker. Delbanco provides a grayly exotic itinerary—Albany, Montreal, Yonkers, Chicago, Milwaukee, New Haven, and as far south as Louisville, Kentucky.

But Melville hardly radiated on stage, and he muttered through his thick beard; one member of the audience complained that his voice was about as powerful as "the creaking of a field mouse through a thick hedge," and another that his "countenance" was "slightly flushed with whisky drinking." He rears from Delbanco's pages like a nineteenth-century John Berryman, another bearded, muttering alcoholic and manic-depressive. The letter of 1877 to which he adds a heartbreaking demotic italicized postscript—"P. S.: *I aint crazy*"—even has something of the wild tilt of *The Dream Songs*.

COLUMBIA, *Refer to us*
columbia.edu/cu/cup



Something Happened
A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies
Edward D. Berkowitz
"The always masterful Ed Berkowitz brings the complexity of the seventies era to life. His pithy accounts of that era's presidents, politics, and policymaking are brilliant."
—David Farber, author of *Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis and America's First Encounter with Radical Islam*



Hollywood and the Culture Elite
How the Movies Became American
Peter Decherney
"[This] original, deeply researched, clearly written, and utterly fascinating book ... illuminate[s] the complex and often unexpected connections between Hollywood films and the Museum of Modern Art, Harvard, and Columbia. It is an outstanding and invaluable work of cultural history."
— Thomas Bender, *New York University*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

II.

BUT HIS WORK OUTLASTED HIM; posterity is a capricious doorman. *Moby-Dick*, above all, was allowed entrance. None of Melville's works was written at the pitch of intensity that marks every page of *Moby-Dick*, and none is as rich or as massive. In nothing else he wrote did he so wallow in words; in nothing else did he make of metaphor a systematic hypothetical constellation of shadow-meanings, a misty allegorical network. Plump with all his reading, ripe with its inheritance, Melville's language in this book displays what Virginia Woolf called "words with roots," or what Coleridge called a language having "the eyes-and-hooks of memory."

Melville's words muster their associations, their deep histories, on every page. There are scores of allusions to the King James Bible. Adjectives and adverbs are placed in glorious, loaded convoy: "The warmly cool, clear, ringing, perfumed, overflowing, redundant days, were as crystal goblets of Persian sherbert, heaped up, flaked up, with rose water snow." With a tiny smirk of irony, Melville saves the word "redundant" for last place in that gorgeous list: as if to say, "I dare you to find any of these multiple adjectives ... *redundant*!" Melville is here describing days of perfect, calm weather at sea, but he might as well be describing his language itself—"heaped up, flaked up"; or what Keats once called language "yeasting itself up."

Again and again, Melville stretches his similes and metaphors, risks their formal success, pushes them to the rim of the plausible, so that rather than simply asserting that *x* is like *y*, he seems often to be floating a hypothesis: suppose that *x* were seen as *y*. We are used to the Flaubertian-Nabokovian idea of simile as predominantly visual, but some of Melville's most daring similes begin as visual likenesses and then swerve into the comparative blindness of abstraction. The *Pequod*'s masts "stood stiffly up like the spines of the three old Kings of Cologne. Her ancient decks were worn and wrinkled, like the pilgrim-worshipped flagstone in Canterbury Cathedral where Becket bled." The first simile in that duet, likening the masts to Cologne cathedral, is visual in impulse, though already nicely alienating; the second, though it seems visual, has a quality of excess, of speculation, of ideation, that pushes it beyond the merely visual. And it might be said to be, in the ordinary sense, not especially "successful" as a simile: however worn and wrinkled these wooded decks were, they can never really have looked much like the gray old stone of Canterbury. But the visual fitness is not the point; the simile is being used to slap on thought, to goad an association, to wander. Simile is being used to enable what Melville called "philosophical ripping" and what we might call philosophical riffing. And simile is being used here, obviously enough, to lend an aura of divinity to this ship of souls.

Moby-Dick is full of these kinds of simile. They effect what the Russian formalists called estrangement, by forcing new linkages and trains of associations. Queequeg, tattooed over his entire body, "seemed to have been in a Thirty Years' War, and just escaped from it with a sticking-plaster shirt." Starbuck has flesh as hard as "twice-baked biscuit. Transported to the Indies, his live blood would not spoil like bottled ale." Daggoo, the hugely tall "negro-savage" is described thus: "There was a corporeal humility in looking up at him; and a white man standing before him seemed a white flag come to beg truce of a fortress." A porpoise is called by Melville a Huzza Porpoise, "because he always swims in hilarious shoals, which upon the broad sea keep tossing themselves to heaven like caps in a Fourth of July crowd." At one moment, the whale's skeleton is compared to that of the philosopher Jeremy Bentham:

> Though Jeremy Bentham's skeleton, which hangs for candelabra in the library of one of his executors, correctly conveys the idea of a burly-browed utilitarian old gentleman, with all Jeremy's other leading personal characteristics, yet nothing of this kind could be inferred from any leviathan's articulated bones.

Almost exactly a hundred years later, Saul Bellow would write the most Melvillean novel of the twentieth century, *The Adventures of Augie March*, and like Melville, he would pack his American material with far-flung allusions and metaphorical references to the Greeks and Romans, and to figures from European history—Caesar, Napoleon, Trotsky, Plutarch, and the like. John Berryman called these figures the novel's "Overlords or Sponsors," and noted how they deepened the scope of Bellow's American naturalism. Something similar occurs in *Moby-Dick*, with its wandering metaphors, its references to Cologne, Canterbury, Bentham, the Thirty Years' War, and so on. Melville, after all, had written in one of his slightly manic letters that a Shakespeare could, even now, be born on the banks of the Ohio River; and *Moby-Dick* was the attempt to make good on that claim, to make a European masterpiece on native American soil—or rather, to float an American masterpiece on international waters.

MELVILLE'S METAPHORS "WANder" most fruitfully into theology and anti-theology. Of all subjects, it is the whale that is described and re-described most obsessively. Sometimes, it looks "like a portly burgher smoking his pipe of a warm afternoon," sometimes like an Ottoman gentleman with his harem, at other times like a book, a Pyramid, a nation, a script. Its mouth is lined "or rather papered with a glistening white membrane, glossy as bridal satins." The whale is broken up like the Godhead—broken up by language, by metaphor. What is this whale that Ahab pursues in his "quenchless feud"? What does it mean? The "mystic" whale, writes Melville, "remains undecipherable," inscrutable. He is both God and Satan, though not recognizably the God or Satan of Biblical tradition. In the famous chapter forty-two, "The Whiteness of the Whale," this giddy accruing of allegorical meaning is finally frozen, and Ishmael confesses that he finds the whiteness, the blankness, of the whale terrifying. Why is whiteness so full of terror? By its indefiniteness, it "shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation ..." And then "whiteness is not so much a colour as the visible absence of colour, and at the same time the concrete of all colours ... a colourless, all-colour of atheism from which we shrink ..."

Melville, raised in the Puritan tradition of allegory, of seeing signs taken for wonders, produced in *Moby-Dick* a kind of blasphemous parody of the theological impulse: an allegory of allegory, of our need to search for signs. Ahab, feuding after religious meaning, proposes, in a famous passage, that "all visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event—in the living act, the undoubted deed—there, some unknown

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but still reasoning thing puts forth the moldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike though the mask!" Yet on the other side, Ishmael confesses that the whiteness of the whale "stabs us from behind" with its very nothingness, its absence. One man, with devoted hatred, striking through the mask; and another, with eloquent fear, confessing that it is not we who strike but the object—or sign—itself that strikes at us. Possessing both men is the fear that, like the Pyramid in *Pierre*, the sarcophagus is empty: the sign has no divine, or even satanic, referent. There is nothing.

Melville is blasphemous not just in the way he confesses his fears, but in the way he uses language and metaphor to frustrate the protocols of religious allegory. He floods allegory with words and similes. Language fills the whale with meaning, but it is language that empties the whale of meaning, too. The dizzying procession of metaphors makes the whale everything and nothing. Melville could see that language explains and conceals God at the same time. Metaphor, likewise, promises to describe God figuratively, by indirection; but such indirection only raises a craving for direct description, raises the very craving that indirection promised to satisfy. What is a metaphorical description of God but a death by approximation? And metaphor is dangerous in another way: as soon as you liken God to something else, you bring God Himself into the ocean of metaphor. You threaten the heretical idea that God is *only* a metaphor.

WITTGENSTEIN ONCE WROTE that "a nothing will serve just as well as a something about which nothing can be said." I think he did not mean this pessimistically; for his philosophical purposes, he was as happy with a description-rich "nothing" as with a description-poor "something." But to a less mystical or less pragmatic religious mind, to a nineteenth-century mind messily desperate for a theological answer, desperate to draw out Leviathan with a hook, to hear God's voice, to find the tomb not empty, there might indeed be something terrifying in the idea that there is little difference between a "something" about which we are constantly talking but of which we never seem to say anything of importance, and a "nothing" about which we can, by definition, say nothing of importance anyway. In both cases, language breaks itself on the rock of indescribability, and the something and the nothing horridly merge, because our language cannot make present either presence or absence.

Melville was aware of this, and sounds a similar note in a letter to Hawthorne: "As soon as you say Me, a God, a nature, so soon you jump off from your stool and hang from the beam ... yes that word is the hangman. Take God out of the dictionary, & you would have Him in the street." Take God out of the dictionary, indeed: *Moby-Dick*, you might say, drowns God in the dictionary, in what the novel itself punningly calls "Noah Webster's ark." God's indescribability, and our inability to describe him in human language, is the profoundest terror animating Melville's amazing book. And we are back to the contradiction, the frozen arrest, the incoherence of Flaubert's joke, in which the atheist at once denies God and confirms his presence: on the one hand, God is, blasphemously, only a word, nothing more; on the other, we will fight him—and note the "flunkeyism" of the capitalized "Him"—on the street. "What did I tell you!" ■

Richard Jenkyns
The Faerie King

THE NARNIAN: THE LIFE AND IMAGINATION OF C. S. LEWIS
By Alan Jacobs
(Harper SanFrancisco, 368 pp., $25.95)

I.

ALAN JACOBS OBSERVES IN his book that C.S. Lewis seems not to have been a particularly likeable or interesting man before his conversion to Christianity in 1929. Lewis himself would probably have agreed. Looking back at that time, he recalled examining himself with a practical purpose for the first time and being appalled by what he found: "a zoo of lusts, a bedlam of ambitions, a nursery of fears, a harem of fondled hatreds." He was probably judging himself by standards that would condemn most of us even more severely, but certainly his conversion appears to have infused and changed every part of his life and action.

Before, he seems not to have known where he was going. He had aspired to be a poet, and had published a couple of long verse narratives that few people have ever cared to read then or since; and he had been forced to recognize that his dearest hope was dead. He knew that he wanted to be an academic (it is unclear whether he ever considered looking for a job outside Oxford), but oddly he did not know what the subject of his life's work should be. He applied for posts in both philosophy and English literature; as it happened, after a couple of rejections he landed an English job at Magdalen College. Had a philosophy post come his way first, his career might have been unknowably different.

Almost from the moment of his conversion, Lewis acquired an extraordinary fluency. Books poured from him on a wide range of subjects: medieval and Renaissance literature, science fiction, children's books, and Christian writings. Even his explicitly Christian books are diverse in character, ranging from apologetics (*Mere Christianity*) to philosophical theology (*The Problem of Pain*, *Miracles*) and moral theology cast in fictional form (*The Screwtape Letters*, *The Great Divorce*). Once he became famous as a Christian thinker, in his forties, he received a flood of letters from admirers, some of them importunate and tediously persistent; and dutifully he spent a large part of his time replying to them in longhand, and often with a kindness and fullness that encouraged them to write back again and again. All this while holding down a full-time academic post, coping with odd domestic circumstances that drained time and spirit from him, and suffering frequent ill health. He must have been tough.

Richard Jenkyns is the author, most recently, of A FINE BRUSH ON IVORY: AN APPRECIATION OF JANE AUSTEN *(Oxford University Press).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His conversion changed Lewis also as a writer, so one should not consider the Narnia stories in isolation from his other works. He put moral and religious teaching into his children's books, and he dressed moral theology for adults in a fictional guise. All his interests pervade all his best works, and so his reading in classical and Renaissance literature was not too grand to be offered to the young. Narnia is accordingly peopled with satyrs, dryads, and centaurs from Greek mythology, fauns from ancient Italy, talking animals from children's stories, dwarfs and giants from northern folktale. His friend Tolkien objected to the incoherence of this, but the answer is to be found in, say, Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, the poem that Lewis so vigorously defended, at a time when it was out of favor, in his first book, *The Allegory of Love*. What his diverse books have in common is that he wrote always as an advocate. He is chivalric in temperament, a champion, a knight constantly girding himself for another battle. Just occasionally the armored figure may seem more like Don Quixote than the Black Prince.

The Allegory of Love already shows Lewis's refusal to be constrained by conventional academic boundaries. It ranges between French and English poetry, between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, between the exploration of individual poems and the defense of allegory as a form. And it is, characteristically, an evangelizing book, in a mostly (but not entirely) secular sense of that word. Lewis wants us to understand a genre, the allegorical love poetry of the Middle Ages, which, as he says, "is apt to repel the modern reader both by its form and its content," and more than that, he wants to persuade us to delight in it. In this, his first book, he has already found a distinctive tone of voice. The book is personal in a more direct sense, too: already in the first paragraph of his chapter on the *Roman de la Rose* we read, "for myself ... as I confessed ... As far as I myself is concerned ..." This is not egotism, it is the conviction that a writer should be intensely engaged with his subject. This scholarly book reads as an overflowing of the spirit, pouring forth under the pressure of a need to persuade.

Join the Historical Society

A guide to more than 90 years of *The New Republic*, hand-picked by our staff.

tnr.com/arch/hs

IMPROBABLY, THE SAME IS TRUE even of Lewis's only large tome, the one book that he wrote reluctantly, out of a sense of academic duty, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama*. It is interesting that Jacobs judges this to be the greatest of his works. The uninviting title—and Lewis was generally good at titles—is explained by the fact that the volume was one in a series, the *Oxford History of English Literature* (Oxford University Press has recently re-issued it as *Poetry and Prose in the Sixteenth Century*). Is there another textbook so witty, gripping, and entertaining? It is most beautifully written—how curious, but also significant, that Lewis's most eloquent prose, outside his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, should come in his academic works; but its power lies also in the fact that its author lives, intellectually and spiritually, within the century that he is interpreting. Lewis knows that the religious conflicts of the age were hugely important to its literature, and they remain hugely important to himself.

When Lewis notes that Catholics in this century condemned the Anglican church because it did not persecute, we may be sure that he has in mind the Catholics of his own time who condemned Anglicanism for lukewarmness. And he has a distinctive and controversial case to argue: that the Renaissance was regress as well as progress. His first chapter, "New Learning and New Ignorance," has seemed perverse to some, but in exposing the narrowness and the pedantry of some of the Renaissance humanists, and in championing the intellectual power of the best medieval minds, he was at least partly justified, and in some ways he was ahead of his time.

Lewis had a taste for passionate paradox. He points out, for instance, that the early Puritans were censured by their opponents not for gloomy moralism but for an unseemly cheerfulness: washed in the blood of the Lamb, they had no further need for penitence, and it was Catholics such as Thomas More who demanded a darker sense of abiding guilt and purgatorial suffering to come. Compare Screwtape, the experienced devil in *The Screwtape Letters*, on Puritanism: "May I remark in passing that the value we have given to that word is one of the really solid triumphs of the last hundred years? By it we rescue annually thousands from temperance, chastity, and sobriety of life."

JACOBS OFFERS HIS BOOK AS "ALmost a conventional biography in the usual sense of the word," and he provides a fluent and sensible retelling of the main outlines of Lewis's life, with an emphasis on the interpretation of his fiction. It was a life that can sound limited in some of its outward aspects. Apparently an old-fashioned bachelor don until his late and all too short marriage, Lewis was rubicund and tweedy. He once said that he liked hardly any sound as much as healthy adult male laughter; he loved beer and conversation round a fire with like-minded friends. He left the British Isles only twice in his life, neither time at his own impulsion: first to France, to fight in the trenches in the World War I, and then forty years later to Greece, to please his dying wife.

But from another point of view his life was strange and eventful. This supremely English figure was in fact not English at all. Born in Belfast in 1898, he was by origin part of a minority three times over, an Irishman within the United Kingdom, a Protestant within Catholic Ireland, and an Anglican (Episcopalian) within predominantly Presbyterian Ulster. His background was respectably middle class: his mother was the daughter of an Episcopalian clergyman, his father a lawyer who worked for the police courts. As an Anglican, one might have expected him to have belonged to the Englishry in Ireland, Yeats's people, but at least in early adulthood he described himself as a Celt, and in that way distinct from the English.

Yet his Irish background does not seem to have been emotionally important to him; its importance was of another kind. In *Surprised by Joy*, his account of his early life and spiritual odyssey, Lewis describes how foreign England seemed to him when he first encountered it, so lush and thickly wooded. His feeling for England as both familiar and alien may have affected his literary imagination. Jacobs writes well about Lewis's passion for "faery." Faery both is and is not England—it is an England transformed and irradiated by numinous myth. This is what Lewis found and loved in *The Faerie Queen*. Narnia in his otherworld

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is not in fact at all like England—as the Shire is, by contrast, in Tolkien's Middle-Earth; but faery may at least have drawn him to the idea of a world that both is and is not ours.

He was robbed of his childhood twice over, by the death of his mother when he was nine years old, and by being sent away to England to a couple of boarding schools, which he loathed. These deprivations may have had something to do with his writing children's books in middle life. He was severely wounded in World War I, and his life then took a curious turn. He seems to have fallen in love with Mrs. Jane Moore, a widow some two dozen years older than himself; she was the mother of a comrade killed in battle, and he appears also to have promised this friend that he would look after her. Lewis's passion for her seems to have faded fairly soon, but he came to regard her also as his own mother, and looked after her as such, although she became difficult, demanding, and eventually demented. He shared his house not only with her but also with his elder brother, an amiable cove, in some ways intelligent and perceptive, but indolent, childlike, and intermittently alcoholic. That he could write so much while existing in this domestic purgatory is remarkable.

The other strange episode in his life has been made famous by William Nicholson's play *Shadowlands*, which was later made into a film. Joy Gresham, *née* Davidman, an American Jewish divorcee and Christian convert, seems to have fallen in love with Lewis at a distance and came to England to meet him. They became friends, she was diagnosed with cancer, and Lewis, strangely unaware that he was falling in love with her, went through a civil marriage with her so that she could remain in the country. He then recognized his passion for her, but found that the Church of England would not marry him sacramentally because of her divorce. Eventually he found a clergyman who was not under the authority of the Bishop of Oxford and was prepared to conduct the ceremony.

A short period of intense physical and emotional happiness followed. Joy seemed to be cured, but the remission was short-lived; and her death in 1960 almost unhinged him with grief. It was characteristic of Lewis that his erotic fulfilment led him to write a book, *The Four Loves*, a blend of theology, literature, philosophy, imagination, and personal experience. It was originally commissioned as a series of radio talks by an Episcopalian foundation in Atlanta, Georgia, but they found the sections on *eros* too fruity for the American airwaves.

II.

WHY LEWIS WROTE THE Narnia books at all is a puzzling question. The best writers for children have been, like Lewis, disproportionately childless (Lewis Carroll, Beatrix Potter, Robert Louis Stevenson) or the parents of only children (Kenneth Grahame, A. A. Milne), and their books have often originated from stories invented to give pleasure to real children: Carroll, Grahame, and Milne again, as well as Kipling's *Jungle Books*, *Just So Stories*, and *Puck of Pook's Hill*. But Lewis hardly knew any children at the time and he does not appear to have liked them much. He seems to have been puzzled himself: he had simply felt, he said later, that a fairy tale for children was "exactly what I must write—or burst."

The sort of story that he wanted to tell was more unusual at the time he was writing than it may seem now. The theme of the otherworld—the tale of a child transported into another order of existence and usually returning home at the end—was originally created for stories meant for quite small children. The current superstars of children's literature, J. K. Rowling and Philip Pullman, have taken this theme and used it in books intended for a somewhat older market. Adolescents today read a lot of fantasy, but at the time that Lewis was writing this was not so. Fantasy was for small children, and older children moved on to supposedly realistic stories of adventure—the sort of story of which *Treasure Island* is the supreme example. The combination of otherworld fantasy with a kind of moral ambition that we meet in Pullman and in the later Harry Potter books originated with Lewis.

For each of us, the children's books that we have read fall into two classes: those that we discovered when we were children, and those that we have come across since. I did not myself discover the Narnia books in childhood, and so I cannot confidently say how I would have felt about them then. A liberal London vicar, Giles Fraser, has recently expressed his unease about the Narnia books, or at least his fear that they will mire adults in a childish version of Christianity, but he admits that he has to set his own feelings against the judgement of his nine-year-old daughter: "Daddy, it's brilliant." The seven books have between them sold more than eighty-five million copies; against that judgment there is, on one level, no appeal.

The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe was the first to be written. The tale follows the story pattern made famous by Carroll and much imitated since. Four English siblings, two boys and two girls, walk into a wardrobe or closet and find themselves in the land of Narnia, part of an otherworld, the way Alice passes through the looking-glass. Narnia, once a happy realm, has been frozen by the wicked White Witch, and has become a land where it is always winter but never Christmas. Aslan the lion comes from afar, bringing the spring with him, to do battle with the White Witch. But Edmund, one of the four children, has through his own wrongdoing fallen into the Witch's power, and he can only be rescued by Aslan's agreeing to die in his place. Aslan surrenders himself to the Witch and is bound, mocked, and killed; but he returns to life again and routs the forces of evil. And in this way Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection are re-enacted. Time in the otherworld is not our time, and the children grow up and become kings and queens in Narnia, while remaining the same age back on Earth.

Most of the subsequent books—there are seven in all—follow the same story pattern. The protagonists of *The Horse and His Boy*—an escape narrative on the pattern of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*—and *Prince Caspian* are natives of the otherworld, with the visitors from our own world playing at the most a subsidiary role, but the rest are based on the *Through the Looking-Glass* device, with several more children added to the original four. In the final volume,

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE/PERSONAL ASSISTANT

New York City—Highly intelligent, resourceful individuals with exceptional communication skills sought to undertake research projects and administrative tasks for one of Wall Street's most successful entrepreneurs. We welcome applications from writers, musicians, artists, or others who may be pursuing other professional goals in the balance of their time. $90-110k/yr to start (depending on qualifications). Resume to: gen8R@spsfind.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Last Battle, Narnia comes to an end, and we see many of the characters from the earlier stories resurrected and moving through an earthly paradise toward heaven.

THE NARNIA BOOKS ARE good but not very good. The narratives are lively and reasonably inventive, but the stories lack the unique and original vision that makes a very few children's books great. And they lack vivid characters. The boys and the girls who take the leading roles are all pretty colorless: Edmund and Eustace are nasty little boys until they are redeemed by Aslan, but thereafter they are indistinguishable from the others. And none of the minor or quainter characters has the life that almost every figure in Lewis Carroll or Beatrix Potter has. Puddleglum in *The Silver Chair* is an inferior version of Milne's immortal Eeyore, and he is further weakened by Lewis's moralism: beneath his lugubrious exterior he is really the salt of the earth, and this seems soft-centered. Lewis's most imaginative creation is Aslan, the lion who represents Jesus, but he is more of a presence than a character.

I have asked friends who read the Narnia books as children how they felt about the allegory. Some of them have said that they felt cheated when they realized the truth: they had loved the stories, and then found that a grown-up was getting at them after all. But another friend remarked that it was plain to her from the start that the thing was allegorical (not, presumably, that she could have used that term). What might at least be evident to a reasonably alert and imaginative child is that there is something large and mysterious going on behind the narrative surface. Something a little similar happens in other children's books and children can enjoy it. I was certainly conscious as a boy of something excitingly "mystical" in the chapter on "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn" in *The Wind in the Willows* and in the last chapter of *The House at Pooh Corner*. I now know that the former depicts a vision of the great god Pan and the latter is about the loss of childhood; and frankly these texts are less thrilling now that I possess their entire meaning. Eliot once said that great poetry could be appreciated before it is fully understood, but he might have added that some lesser literature is best appreciated before it is fully understood.

MARK JOHNSON, THE PRODUCER of the new Narnia film, anxious to downplay the Christianity in Narnia, has said that when he first read Lewis, "it never occurred to me Aslan was anything more than a great lion." That was certainly imperceptive. It is just about possible to say that Aslan in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, the first book of the series, is a type of Christ, who re-enacts the crucifixion and the resurrection, but in the sequels he is inescapably Christ himself. Nothing more than a great lion? Like the risen Jesus, he is fully physical but he comes and goes as he wills. He is the object of worship; he is numinous; he has miraculous and transforming powers. The young reader may be unaware of the Christian significances, but it is a dull child who does not sense that Aslan is supernatural.

To look for Lewis without Christianity is like looking for narcotic-free heroin: whether or not you are hooked on the drug, you would be missing the point. Apart from anything else, you would be making an aesthetic mistake. As a writer Lewis is best and most original when he is most Christian. Like it or not, this is where his imagination is most fully engaged. Aslan is the best thing in the Narnia books: the conception of Christ as a great cat, lovable and furry but also powerful, terrible, and strange, is indeed brilliant, and when Aslan appears, the stories acquire a new vividness.

Cynics have attributed the filmmakers' busy denial of the Christianity in Narnia to a concern for the box office, but its causes are more probably cultural and psychological. According to Tilda Swinton, who plays the White Witch, the original book is more spiritual than religious, and anyway, "You can make a religious allegory out of anything if that's what you're interested in." Well, no, you can't; and if she ever turns to *The Screwtape Letters* or *The Great Divorce*, she will find that Lewis directs some of his most withering satire upon those who try to dissolve religion into a blur of vague spiritual uplift. Swinton again: "It's about finding self-sufficiency in difficult circumstances and finding the capacity to dig deep, survive, and prevail."

That is almost exactly wrong. Certainly the books advocate courage and virtue, but if there is one thing that they recurrently proclaim, it is human insufficiency. In each of the books the children cannot survive and prevail if they rely on themselves: they need the grace that comes from Aslan. The books also teach the disregard of self: it is by turning inward upon themselves that the children stumble and by forgetting themselves and caring for others that they are rescued.

This much may be conceded to the de-Christianizers: the stories can make sense as moral myths—about courage, honor, unselfishness, insufficiency, and the relation of the divine to the created order—without specifically Christian reference. Only once, I think, in *The Last Battle*, very near the end of the entire cycle, does Lewis make an explicitly Christian allusion. In this book there is a stable, insignificant to outward view, but which, once entered, opens out into the earthly paradise; and Lucy, the most "religious" of the children, observes, "In our world

Early Snow

Some mornings are like this,
the stupor of longing or pure light,
stillness in a rifled grouse,
the black woods legible to a woman
whose heart is made of false starts,
the ruddy life of a hill gone blank
or what the face in the window
wants to believe of her past,
architecture of a white house,
this draft of rooms, paramour planets,
children with gentle hands, kindling
piled near the moon's pillar, this draft
of despotic love, then distance, vacancy,
then forgiven words accumulating
like snow, just when the world
is finished with us, we build a wall
with rocks and the work is the whole
body inside the idea of belonging
somewhere, even if not for long,
mineral world of slate and flint,
numinous like these days and others
wintering, we test what will hold,
attenuated voices that lean
and fall, the argent sky, the worry
we don't need anyone.

STACIE CASSARINO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

too, a Stable once had something inside it that was bigger than our whole world."

LEWIS HAS COME UNDER FEROcious attack from some who have no doubt about his Christian content. Jacobs quotes from a couple of his enemies. The first is the British critic and novelist Philip Hensher:

> Let us drop C. S. Lewis and his ghastly, priggish, half-witted, money-making drivel about Narnia down the nearest deep hole ... They are revoltingly mean-minded books, written to corrupt the minds of the young with allegory, smugly denouncing anything that differs in the slightest respect from Lewis's creed of clean-living, muscular Christianity, pipe-smoking, misogyny, racism, and the most vulgar snobbery.

The other is Philip Pullman, who has repeatedly celebrated his loathing of Lewis (ungraciously, considering how much he owes to him). The message of Narnia, according to Pullman, is that "Death is better than life; boys are better than girls; light-colored people are better than dark-colored people; and so on." The books, on this account, are "nauseating drivel," and Pullman detests "the reactionary sneering, the misogyny, the racism."

This invective would not have surprised Lewis, who once observed that "few things in the ordinary peacetime life of a civilized country are more nearly fiendish than the rancour with which a whole unbelieving family will turn on the one member of it who has become a Christian." And indeed the rancor of some of Lewis's foes does seem to belong more to psychopathology than literary criticism. But is there anything in it? Not much, I think. Boys and girls are equally heroic and virtuous in the stories. The accusation of misogyny I do not understand. The charge of racism is based on the fact that the Calormenes, the people of the great pagan empire to the south of Narnia, are described as swarthy; but this, as Jacobs sensibly remarks, is owed to the fact that Lewis is creating an otherworld version of the East and the South in the European experience. He was drawing on the *Arabian Nights* and perhaps the *Song of Roland*; Tashbaan, the Calormene capital, is a kind of Baghdad or Babylon, and the quite complex depiction of its culture, luxurious, civilized, urbane, subtle, and cruel, is one of the best things in the Narnia series. The swarthiness of the Calormenes is merely one of the facts about them (no one complains about the paleness of the White Witch, the chief villain in the first of the books). Emeth, the chivalrous Calormene warrior, is as admirable as anyone in the series. Aravis, the heroine of *The Horse and his Boy*, is a Calormene; she becomes queen of a northern kingdom, and mother of its greatest king, who is therefore of mixed race, if you care about such things, which Lewis evidently did not.

LEWIS DID NOT THINK THAT death was better than life. He thought that earthly life was good—the Narnia books are full of food and drink and solid sensuous pleasures—but that heavenly life would be much better still. At the end of the series, all but one of the children are killed in a train crash in England and go to heaven in the otherworld. It must be conceded that this is a wretchedly clumsy device. Lewis wanted to depict the end of time in his otherworld, and he wanted his children to be part of it, and he failed to find a satisfactory way of bringing this about. (In *The Screwtape Letters* the human "patient" is similarly killed by a bomb, but here Lewis was able to explore the counterbalance between human fear, pain and misery and the divine victory, as in a children's book he could not.) One child, Susan, is left alive on earth, and according to another of the children, Jill, she is "interested in nothing nowadays except nylons and lipstick and invitations. She always was a jolly sight too keen on being grown-up."

Lewis has been much censured for this—by A. N. Wilson, in a hostile biography, and once more by Pullman, who explains that Susan has passed through puberty and her sexual maturation "is so dreadful and so redolent of sin" that Lewis has "to send her to Hell." This is simply a misreading. In the first place, as Jacobs rightly notes, Susan is not sent to hell; she is left on earth, her future development and destiny unknown. More significantly, her creator's complaint is that she has not matured enough:

> "Grown-up, indeed," said the Lady Polly. "I wish she *would* grow up. She wasted all her school time wanting to be the age she is now, and she'll waste all the rest of her life trying to stay that age. Her whole idea is to race on to the silliest time of one's life as quick as she can and then stop there as long as she can."

Susan's fault, in other words, is not maturation but worldliness, conformity, and a kind of childishness.

In fact, Lewis might more justly be faulted for the opposite error: for making his children grow up before their time and become boringly sententious. While remaining children on earth they become adults, they marry, and they rule as kings and queens in Narnia. They lose their childish slang and begin to speak in a ceremonious and mildly archaic manner. (To discover the reason for this, we can turn again to Lewis's academic work, this time to *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, where he describes the courtly and elaborate address of Adam and Eve to each other as a mark of their unfallen state, lost after they succumb to sin.) It is never really explained why ordinary English children become rulers of the otherworld—maybe it is an echo of Queen Alice at the end of *Through the Looking-Glass*—and it is perhaps an unsatisfactory aspect of the Narnia books. But it should at least acquit Lewis of the charge of wanting to keep his children childish.

ONE CANNOT QUITE SAY THAT Lewis never talks down to his young readers, but such moments are not common. Essentially he respects them. He certainly thought that children's books could bear messages even for their elders. In one of his adult works he used the "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn" in *The Wind in the Willows* to illustrate the nature of numinousness, and in his book on Milton he brought out the basic and universal simplicity of Adam and Eve's disobedience by comparing them to Peter Rabbit, who "came to grief because he *would* go into Mr McGregor's garden." Conversely, he was ready to offer to children what he had already offered to the grown-ups. *The Great Divorce* is about the denizens of hell going in a coach on a day-trip to heaven. Its theme is that the damned choose their own damnation: the trippers—they include a liberal bishop who runs a theological society in hell—are so self-absorbed that they refuse to see the heaven around them. That idea returns in *The Last Battle*, when the dwarfs, admitted to the earthly paradise, sit round in a circle looking inward and denying that there

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is anything to see, touch, or taste, trapped in their surly refusal to be taken in.

When the dust of battle clears, the curious and enduring fact about C. S. Lewis is that he is still there. One might expect the Narnia books to have come to seem too middle class, too English, too dated in their language and their values; but they still delight a vast number of young readers. The English literature profession complained in his lifetime that his books were not proper scholarship; but *The Allegory of Love*, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, and *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* must still be read by anyone with a serious interest in their subjects (the Milton book by anyone seriously interested in epic at all), and few academic books enjoy that long a life. There is at least a touch of genius in Lewis. It is to be found not in the Narnia books, decent though they are, but in *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Great Divorce*, and the best of his literary studies. At Wheaton College in Illinois, Alan Jacobs's institution, Lewis's pipes and beermugs may be reverentially inspected in a glass case; and on the big screen he has been impersonated by Anthony Hopkins; and in Monrovia, California he is sanctified in a stained-glass window. Such things do not happen to many professors of English. ■

Nathan Glazer

Late Admissions

THE CHOSEN:
THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF
ADMISSION AND EXCLUSION AT
HARVARD, YALE, AND PRINCETON
By Jerome Karabel
(Houghton Mifflin, 711 pp., $28)

"Viewed from both a historical and comparative perspective," Jerome Karabel tells us at the beginning of his huge book, "the admissions practices of America's top colleges and universities are exceedingly strange. Just try to explain to anyone from abroad—from, say, France, Japan, Germany, or China—why the ability to run with a ball or where one's parents went to college is relevant to who will gain a place in our nation's most prestigious institutions of higher education." These admissions practices are indeed unique among national educational systems, familiar as they are to anxious students and their parents.

But what is even stranger is that they are all intimately tied up with an issue that obsessed the elite institutions of American higher education during the first half or two-thirds of the twentieth century: the desire to limit the number of Jews that were admitted. It is no exaggeration to call this an obsession. This issue was entangled with all the others involved in recruiting an appropriate student body, at a time when the elite institutions competed to maintain their high social status and thus their appeal to those who could afford an expensive private education, and could be counted on to support the institution and to maintain its eminence.

The story that Karabel tells is not new, and the "hidden" in his subtitle is excessive. The history has been recounted in rich detail in Harold Wechsler's *The Qualified Student: A History of Selective College Admission in America* (1977), in Marcia Graham Synnott's *The Half-Opened Door: Discrimination and Admissions at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, 1900–1970* (1979), in Dan A. Oren's *Joining the Club: A History of Jews and Yale* (1986), in David O. Levine's *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration, 1915–1940* (1986), and in a number of unpublished theses, all of which Karabel acknowledges. But his book is of larger scope than any of the others, and he seems to have searched deeper into the archives, which are, from his account, remarkably open; and he has been able to go deeper into the arcane procedures that these institutions have devised to select their undergraduate classes. (There is nothing arcane in the selection of the graduate students: the professors do that.) Karabel's research reveals many things that are embarrassing today, even in these latter days when anti-Semitism in America is of little moment and Jews occupy the presidencies of the very institutions that once discriminated against them.

Karabel places the story of Jewish exclusion in the larger context of the role of these institutions in American life, and their efforts to preserve their position as certifying an elite for American society. At the beginning of the century, one could argue that "merit," of a sort, was the principal basis for admission to these institutions. Each of them required some knowledge of Latin and Greek for admission. Harvard under its great president Charles W. Eliot had eliminated Greek in 1898, and was later to eliminate Latin, but Yale and Princeton lagged behind.

Since the classical languages were taught primarily in academies for the well-to-do and the well-born and those aspiring to professional positions in medicine or the clergy, no special measures beyond this requirement were needed to control the social profile of those admitted. Latin, Greek, and a suitable score in the institutions' own entry examinations sufficed to ensure a student body of boys from the elite white Protestant upper and upper-middle class. The institutions could tolerate the few Jews, Catholics, and even blacks who gained entry under these conditions. (Princeton, the least liberal of these institutions, did maintain a strict ban against blacks.)

But with mass Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, beginning in the 1880s, matters changed radically. Here was a group whose aspiring sons, whatever the reasons, were very adept at taking examinations and at learning what was necessary to gain entry to institutions of higher education. The new immigrant Jewish population was also concentrated in cities close to Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, and not long before the beginning of the new century there was already nervousness and anxiety over the influx of Jewish students. Columbia, in New York City, was on the front lines of this anxiety, and the first expressions of alarm were sounded there. The days when Latin, Greek, and an adequate mark in the entry examinations guaranteed admission were soon over, and new measures to control admissions had to be devised to reduce the number of Jews.

It was first naïvely thought that a better measure of intelligence, or some tests

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of character, would reduce the number of Jews, but no available test could do so. The explosion of apparently scientific methods of testing in World War I, devised to classify soldiers, suggested that perhaps Jews could be shown to be in some way deficient, but that was not the case. A new and distinctive approach to admissions had to be forged, in which academic merit, however defined, had to be supplemented and supplanted by other excluding requirements. Columbia pioneered in these measures. It was the first university to set up an admissions office, to limit the numbers of the entering class, to introduce criteria for "character" and "leadership." But there was no way to limit the number of Jews by the application of uniform nondiscriminatory measures. Direct exclusion on the basis of being Jewish was necessary, if this was to be done.

Harvard was next in line. The Jewish population of Boston was large, and together with the much larger Jewish population of New York City it was enough to make up one-fifth of the entering class in the early 1920s—far more than at Yale or Princeton, which were nevertheless agitated by their miniscule number of Jews. President A. Lawrence Lowell, who succeeded the liberal Eliot, took the drastic step, out of a misguided self-confidence, of proposing publicly a quota to limit the number of Jews. (This story has often been told, though Karabel adds new details.) The proposal was brought to the faculty, and the Harvard faculty eventually turned down the proposal for a Jewish quota; but under the peculiar system of government that we find in American private institutions of higher education (and in the public institutions, too), the faculty is only one player and by no means a major one in admissions decisions.

Lowell was able over time, through his control of the admissions process, which is everywhere a prerogative of the administration, to introduce measures that reduced the number of Jews. When a faculty committee urged that the top seventh of students graduating from suitable secondary schools be considered eligible for admission, and it turned out that Jews made up 40 percent of the students admitted under this provision, the administration simply decided that it would determine which schools were eligible for the one-seventh rule. Needless to say, they were not high schools with high proportions of Jews.

After the great public struggle at Harvard—with Professor Felix Frankfurter and Judge Julian Mack, an Overseer of the university, and both Jews, leading the opposition to President Lowell—no other college or university administrator thought it wise to raise the question publicly. The admissions office was under the control of the president, which was sufficient. It took the necessary measures to reduce the number of Jews.

And so the pattern of admission to elite institutions was set in the 1920s. It consisted in a limitation of numbers (there was none before the 1920s, when colleges competed for larger numbers); an admissions office that required pictures, interviews, and other means to determine the identities of those to be excluded; a strong preference for athletes and alumni children; and an effective sidelining of the faculty, which, when it made its views known, generally called for higher academic standards. The admissions offices generally looked for the "all-American boys," and a well-rounded class that included a sufficient number of happy academic mediocrities from the upper social strata.

If the dominant issue in admissions decision-making during the first half or more of the twentieth century, and the first two-thirds of Karabel's history of admissions to the "Big Three," was the Jewish problem, this was also because it was intimately connected to all the other key issues in admissions decisions. For a start, the Jewish issue was directly tied to the first and central issue to be decided in admissions decisions: how much account to take of academic merit. If we consider leading universities as primarily scholarly institutions, which is how they regard themselves, committed to the training and the education of the most intellectually qualified students, and to fostering the highest achievement in the humanities and the sciences, how can one avoid considering academic qualifications? But if this criterion was to be paramount, then the number of Jews would rise. That was the simple matter of fact during most of the century, whatever its causes; and it was demonstrated again and again to the dismay of college presidents and admissions administrators. If primacy was to be placed on intellectual qualifications, there was no way of keeping the number of Jewish students down.

Second, the Jewish issue was tied directly to questions of democracy and class. If the institutions gave primacy to academic qualification, the number of children from the working classes, and of lower income, rose. The main repository of students who were academically acceptable and also of working-class and low-income background during the first half of the twentieth century was among the Jewish immigrants of the large Northeastern cities, predominantly New York. Karabel regularly compares, as a measure of the degree of preference for students of elite prep schools (Groton, St. Paul's, and the like), how many Harvard, Yale, and Princeton admitted from these schools with the numbers admitted from the examination high schools of New York City and Philadelphia. These latter were simply a proxy for Jews. The number of applicants admitted from them, despite their huge graduating classes, was miniscule compared with the numbers admitted from the relatively tiny graduating classes of the elite prep schools.

The barely acceptable students of high status (such as the young George W. Bush, admitted to Yale in 1964 with marginal qualifications), who formed an important part of their student bodies, were not to be found among Jewish applicants. If the social status of the student body was to be maintained, this meant keeping down the number of Jews who were, by definition, during much of the twentieth century, excluded from elite social status by those who held it. If the number of Jews increased, either because academic achievement was given a greater place in admission decisions, or because the institution was aiming for a more democratic posture (they all prided themselves on being "democratic," though that meant different things in different places), then the social status of the student body, and the attractiveness of the institution to those of high social status, would decline.

Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania, two Ivy League schools located in cities with a large number of qualified Jewish applicants, had the most difficult problem, and they failed in their efforts to adequately limit Jewish numbers. Columbia's efforts were fully laid out by Harold Wechsler in *The Qualified Student*. I am not aware of any discussion of whether or how the University of Pennsylvania dealt with the problem. Perhaps it didn't try. In both universities,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

owing to the high percentages of Jewish students, their status as members of the Ivy League declined, and the social elites of New York City and Philadelphia sent their sons further afield to Yale, Princeton, and Harvard. Karabel quotes a student ditty as early as 1910:

> Oh, Harvard's run by millionaires,
> And Yale is run by booze,
> Cornell is run by farmers' sons,
> And Columbia's run by Jews ...

And it gets worse from there.

THE JEWISH QUESTION WAS tied up also with the role of athletics and its place in higher education. Why athletics should be so important in American higher education is mystifying to the untutored mind, but so it is. Karabel tells a remarkable story of just how significant sports were considered at the highest level of American society and politics. After the 1905 season, which was particularly brutal, with a number of students killed, Columbia, Stanford, Northwestern, and California gave up football. President Eliot of Harvard also wanted to give it up, in which case other institutions would follow. Karabel continues:

> Sensing the gravity of the situation, [President] Theodore Roosevelt—acting at the suggestion of ... Endicott Peabody [founder and headmaster of Groton]—called for a conference at the White House in October 1905 with the purpose of reforming, and thereby saving, the game. He believed if the Big Three could agree on the reforms, other colleges would follow their lead, so no other colleges were invited. Leading the reform effort was Harvard's football coach Willian T. Reid Jr. '01, a close ally of Roosevelt's and the recipient of a $7,000 stipend and expense account—larger than that of any Harvard faculty member." Reforms were decided upon, adopted by the Intercollegiate Athletic Association, and the Harvard Corporation voted to retain football, to the disgruntlement of its president. Football was saved.

More Jews meant fewer athletes. When, in the mid-1960s, Yale went whole hog against discrimination under President Kingman Brewster and his choice for admissions director, R. Inslee Clark Jr., finally wiping out discrimination against Jews in the admissions committee, the average height of entering Yale students dropped. The well-rounded student, the all-American boy, meant distinction in sports, among other things, and such was the ideal Yale student until Clark's revolutionary transformation of the admissions process in the 1960s.

Finally, allowing the number of Jewish students to increase threatened to reduce the degree of preference that could be given to "legacies," children of alumni, and to weaken alumni loyalty and their important stream of contributions. If there were to be more Jews, there would be fewer opportunities for legacy admissions, for few Jews qualified as legacy applicants. So the issue of Jews in the elite institutions was not a simple one, and it is hardly to be encompassed in all its dimensions by attributing it to anti-Semitism—which is not to say that anti-Semitism was not also involved. Jewish admissions were at the heart of most of the issues raised by the questions: whom shall we recruit, whom shall we admit, with what effect on our institution in competition with others.

By the time discrimination against Jews, whatever its causes, was finally broken, which was not really until the 1960s, this link between the Jewish issue and the issues of class, status, legacy, and athletics had for the most part been dissolved by the social rise of the Jewish population. One could by then recruit Jews who were as well-to-do financially as non-Jews, who had gone to leading prep schools and could make a claim to high social status, whose parents were graduates of the institutions, and who perhaps were even gifted in some branch of athletic endeavor or another.

BY THE 1960S, DISCRIMINAtion against Jews as such in the admissions office of the elite schools seems to have ended, but the admissions offices still worried about imbalances in the entering classes if they gave too high a place to academic achievement. It is true that Yale now sent recruiters into the New York City high schools it had once avoided, in its new and earnest search for good students outside the strata in which it had traditionally found its students. The roster of schools whose students seemed to find it very difficult to get into the elite institutions changed. But ironically they were still the Jewish high schools. The high schools of New York City, from which, when they were largely Jewish, suspiciously few students of high achievement gained admission, were now replaced by the high schools of the New York suburbs to which Jews had moved, Great Neck and Scarsdale and so on.

These schools now discovered that it was hard for their best students to gain admission to Harvard. It was in 1969 or 1970 that a group of Jewish faculty members met with Harvard's director of admissions to ask why this was so. Well, he told us, there is this donut around New York that produces so many good students that they would dominate the college if admissions were to be made on the basis of academic merit, without regard to geographical and sociological diversity. ("The donut, or the bagel?" asked Henry Rosovsky, shortly to become an admired and effective dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.) By this time, the high schools of New York City were being visited by recruiters from Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, but by then they were dominantly black and Hispanic. There was something to be said, after all, for national geographical representation, and a better representation of blacks and Hispanics in America's elite institutions of higher education.

One factor in ending discrimination was the law. After World War II, Massachusetts passed a law against discrimination in admissions to institutions of higher education, a law that was fought by Harvard because it wanted to maintain its autonomy—or its freedom to discriminate—in admissions. New York passed a similar law, which was fought by Columbia. New Jersey passed a similar law, fought by Princeton. In Connecticut, many efforts were made to pass such a law, but they were successfully fought by Yale. The passage of national civil rights legislation in 1965 further imposed a non-discriminatory obligation. The law mattered; and the change in public opinion and sentiment mattered—but the change in the social circumstances of American Jews also mattered in bringing an end to the Jewish issue in college and university admissions.

Karabel suggests that one factor that made the end of discrimination possible was the postwar shift in support for the major colleges and universities to federal funds. This reduced the influence of the alumni, the most conservative of the constituencies of the colleges and universi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ties. Federal funds gave greater power to the administrations (in another way, to the faculty), but certainly not to the alumni. Enlightened administrators—Kingman Brewster of Yale is Karabel's best example—were freer to think of the interests of the nation, following the path of President James Bryant Conant of Harvard.

And the interests of the nation, by the late 1960s, at a time when racial riots erupted in city after city, meant the moderation of racial conflict. "For Brewster," Karabel remarks, "the main danger was the escalating racial conflict that threatened to tear the society apart; in the absence of 'true emancipation,' Brewster wrote in a letter to an alumnus, 'the whole country' might 'go up in the flames of racial hate.'" Similarly, Conant wrote during the Depression about the danger of class conflict, and called for "'a more equitable distribution of opportunity' ... For both Conant and Brewster, domestic threats were reinforced by challenges from abroad ... —in Conant's case, by Nazism and Communism; in Brewster's, by a variety of alternatives to capitalism, many of them ill defined, that held a powerful appeal among many radicals in the 1960's." For both, the antidote was a "conspicuous commitment to equality of opportunity through education that would convince the excluded that they had a stake in the existing system."

KARABEL DESCRIBES AN ENORmous social change, from a time when the elite institutions consisted primarily of WASP men—he gives a figure of 85 percent for Harvard in 1900, when Franklin Roosevelt entered—to a current situation in which he reckons the representation of WASP men to be reduced to 20 percent. All the institutions went fully co-ed in the late 1960s, '70s, and '80s. All failed in the effort to maintain, as many had hoped, a quota on women so as to maintain more room for men. All had increased greatly their recruiting efforts, and the numbers enrolled, among blacks and Hispanics. Anti-Jewish discrimination was long gone. Indeed, at Princeton there was public discussion and concern over the decline in the percentage of Jews, which was taken as a sign that the institution was less attractive to the most intellectually gifted. And the new emphasis on intellectual achievement meant a disproportionate number of Asian students in the elite institutions. There was some concern in admissions offices in the 1980s, some investigation of complaints of discrimination by Asian organizations. But Harvard, Yale, and Princeton seem content to let Asian admissions rise to whatever level their intellectual attainments permit.

One would think that this enormous transformation would be a cause for celebration, a sign of the decency of American society and of the flexibility of its institutions and their ability to adapt to social change. Karabel agrees, but rather grudgingly. He believes that the efforts to recruit and to expand the number of blacks were owed more to the fear of racial disorder, in the institutions themselves and outside in the nearby cities, than to a generous effort of the elite to include those who had been excluded. The universities were opened to women mainly as a result of competitive pressures—Yale and Princeton were losing out to Harvard in student choices because Harvard already had women students. Yes, academic achievement did become more important in admission decisions, but this was the consequence of competition, at a time when universities distinguished themselves by getting students with higher SAT scores. And all these changes were fought—but unsuccessfully—by alumni revolts at Yale and Princeton.

Despite all these changes, Karabel concludes that these elite universities are still far from being ideal meritocratic institutions. There is a very substantial preference at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton for alumni children—in 2002 at Harvard, 40 percent of legacies were admitted, compared with 11 percent of other applicants. (But note that 60 percent were not admitted.) At Princeton in 1998, legacies were offered admission at a rate three times that of other applicants. And surprisingly large percentages of students come in under the preference for athletes. And even with the degree of preference that prevails for blacks and Hispanics, there is only a miniscule representation of students from lower economic strata and from the working class.

What if these institutions were to become fully meritocratic? That would not quite satisfy Karabel either. In his last pages he brings up Michael Young's satire *The Rise of the Meritocracy*, from 1958, whose point was that a fully implemented meritocratic society simply creates a new governing class, maintaining its privileges and passing them on to its children. The governing principle of the meritocracy is equality of opportunity, which is not of course equality of condition, a worthier objective to Karabel. But what could equality of condition look like when it comes to higher education? In his concern for greater class diversity in the elite institutions, Karabel suggests that "any serious attempt to attain greater economic diversity will require a reassessment of the very meaning of 'merit.' For by conventional definitions, the privileged *are* the meritorious...." But that way confusion lies. Revising the meaning of merit will do nothing to maintain the quality of these institutions, which even with their present defects are still considered the best in the world. We should be content with equality of opportunity. Anyway, we still have a way to go to realize it. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 5

ACT OF COMPROMISE

SPENCER ACKERMAN MISCHARACterizes the motivations behind the original passage of the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act ("Coup de Grâce," October 31). He writes that Posse Comitatus, a "cornerstone in the development of U.S. liberty," was enacted by a benevolent Congress for "the preservation of liberty that comes from restricting the active-duty military from civilian affairs." The PCA was passed in 1878 as a political compromise to appease Southern Democrats. In the 1876 election, President Ulysses S. Grant had sent troops to South Carolina and Louisiana to make sure black voters were not turned away at the polls. As a result, Republican Rutherford B. Hayes won the election by just one disputed electoral vote. Democrats threatened chaos; to appease them, congressional Republicans agreed to pass the PCA, and Hayes reluctantly signed it in 1878. Instead of preserving liberties, the PCA effectively ended Reconstruction, and it ushered in the era of Jim Crow. In the election following the PCA, three of four Southern black congressmen lost their seats.

TOM BUSSE
San Francisco, California

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW YORK DIARIST

Street Fair

Orchard Street's windows have enticed Manhattan strivers for decades, from the days when Jewish immigrants sold dry goods to today, when fashion designers sell $150 jeans. My grandmother recalled pausing outside an Orchard Street window in 1915, at age six, to admire a charlotte russe in a bakery. She never expected to taste it, but her brother secretly bought her one the next day. Into her nineties, after diabetes barred sucrose from her diet, she held onto the surprise of the rich strawberry cream swirl.

Today, I can pick from a slate of sweet shops between that spot and my apartment ten blocks away: There's BabyCakes and Happy Happy Happy and the Sunshine Factory Café and Sugar Sweet Sunshine, and soon there'll be the Sugar Café. But my fellow arrivistes no longer buy and sell surprises. These Lower East Side storefronts now display a predictable mix of lattes, body washes, and other staples of the urban elite. But, at a recent Orchard Street event, I glimpsed how surprise could return.

Several one-story buildings vanished from Orchard Street this fall to make way for a glassy tower with condos and a hotel. Construction scaffolding drove foot traffic from the surviving shops. So, one bright Sunday, the Lower East Side Business Improvement District (BID), a merchants' and landlords' association, invited local artists to paint the scaffolding. Painters adorned its wood planks with icons (the Katz's Deli sign) and images (a seal tipping a sewing machine on its nose) evocative of the area's history. Dara Lehon of the BID called this "LES Paint Out" the artists' chance to bridge the neighborhood's heritage and its future. But some neighbors branded it a cover-up.

That charge comes from Rebecca Moore, a musician who has lived on the corner since 1985. Moore decries the BID's insistence on preapproving the artists' work. "It looked like a movie poster," she says of the murals. And she questions any celebration of the condo-hotel—whose design, she says, features a gratuitous deck from which residents will peer over (and maybe even flick cigarette ashes on) nearby tenements.

Moore, 37, cherished the Lower East Side when it offered only one latte shop and a few galleries. She says her building's multilingual tenants forged ties over the years, learning one another's traditions and watching one another's backs. But, as liquor licenses and rents burgeoned, most of Moore's neighbors moved out. These days, her Ludlow-Orchard Community Organization resists a barrage of bars. She says impromptu contact with her new neighbors is largely limited to leaning out her sixth-floor window after 3 a.m. and shushing drunks.

Moore invokes a grotesque vision of Manhattan: a juvenile city of homogenous chichi towers and nightlife corridors. "Every postcard about New York City was always about the mixing of people," says Moore. "I fear for New York now." But the Paint Out struck a modest blow against this nightmare. The BID could have just dished out discount cards for the boutiques. Instead, it tried to draw swells to interact with locals. If Moore did the same, she might be surprised.

For instance, I have a financial-exec friend whose tailored suits and precise bangs suggest he'd puff a cigar on a parapet. But he grew up on a farm in India and volunteered his time to redesign a downtown Mexican restaurant after September 11. Its owners named their "hangover cure" *chilaquiles* after him and helped him start a side business designing lamps. Notably, my friend likes looking in the window of an art gallery on his street. Like my grandmother, he treasures the sidewalk.

Another friend's street hockey league convenes on blacktops along the East River. One player is a movie star. Another is a public housing resident who discovered hockey when he walked up to the yuppies in ironic t-shirts playing below his building. League founders recently attended his child's christening. City policies, like rent-stabilization and new zoning laws that earmark high-rise units for lower-income families, preserve economic diversity. But it takes chance encounters to bring that diversity to life.

Unfortunately, in their efforts to woo the rich, cities too often downplay such encounters. From Orchard Street to prefab "walkable" L.A. megablocks, mayors champion projects that disrupt the habits of city life. In response, earlier gentrifiers like Moore try to freeze demographics by opposing certain types of buildings. They would do better to focus on the way in which the street is used.

In New York, neighborhood institutions can press developers to provide parkland or affordable apartments. They can also get a little public money for events and outreach. Moore knows this: She's seeking to mitigate the hotel's adverse effects via block associations and the city-sponsored community board. But she seems to see dialogue as a dead end. "I doubt I'll ever pass the developer on the street," she says. Maybe not. But maybe she already has, and neither deigned to talk to the other.

What drew Moore to the neighborhood keeps me hopeful about it: exposure. My 500-foot walk to the supermarket bathes me in Dominican reggaeton, Fujianese slang, Orthodox Jewish ritual, and hipster fashion. But just absorbing street sensations is as noble as scarfing a cupcake. Artists and civic groups can make the street an enlightening zone.

Artist Daniel Greenfeld caught a nice surprise at the Paint Out: a 30-minute assist from a "very polite" eight-year-old named Atulya. "I paint in a messy way and expected he would just grab a brush," says Greenfeld. "But he painted very well."

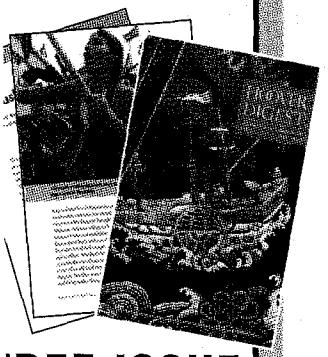
Culture lacks the force of law, but it can train condo buyers to know the value of street life beyond the scaffolds. Blocking the wealthy from vibrant neighborhoods isn't an option. It would deprive those places of some amazing people, anyway. Opening windows onto the street, however, can bring surprises that ripen over time. **ALEC APPELBAUM**

Alec Appelbaum is a writer in New York City.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cutting-Edge Commentary on Public Policy

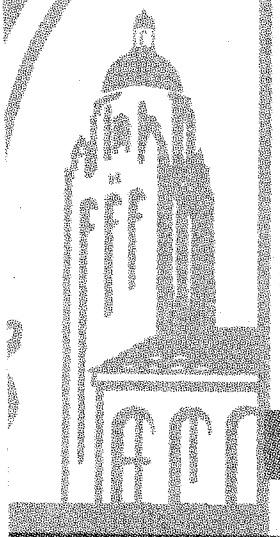
HOOVER DIGEST
RESEARCH AND OPINION ON PUBLIC POLICY



FREE ISSUE

Receive a complimentary issue of the latest Digest without obligation.

Call 800.935.2882 or visit www.hooverdigest.org



Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

In the new issue of the Hoover Digest . . .

Sleepwalking Moralists

Present-day moralists lecture the civilized but ignore the brutes.

To paraphrase the ancient Greeks, it is easy to be moral in your sleep. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and other global humanitarian groups recently expressed criticism over the slated trial of the accused mass murderer Saddam Hussein. Such self-appointed auditors of moral excellence were worried that his legal representation was inadequate. Or perhaps they felt the court of the new Iraqi democracy was not quite up to the standards of wigged European judges in The Hague. Relay those concerns to the nearly one million silent souls butchered by Saddam's dictatorship. Once they waited in vain for any such international human rights organizations to stop the murdering. None could or did. Sleepwalking moralizers chastise those who listen and are civilized—but see nothing, hear nothing, and speak nothing about those in the moral abyss.

—Victor Davis Hanson

Back to the USSR

They've gotten used to freedom, so why do Russians still yearn for the old days?

Is Putin's long-run aim to restore the old Soviet Union? Russians always insist that it would be impossible to turn back the clock. Yet there is a discernible nostaligia for the terrible simplification of the old days. One recent poll found that 53 percent of Russians still regard Stalin as a great leader. The explanation is not far to seek: The collapse of communism has meant a dramatic decline in living standards. Since 1989, the Russian mortality rate has risen from below 11 per 1,000 to more than 15 per 1,000—nearly double the American rate. Whether Putin can raise living standards as quickly as they have been raised in China is a moot point. But what he can undoubtedly give Russians is a sense of geopolitical revival.

—Niall Ferguson

CALL 800.935.2882 TO RECEIVE A FREE ISSUE!

HOOVER INSTITUTION

. . . ideas defining a free society

'ANFORD UNIVERSITY, Stanford California 94305-6010 Toll-free: 877.466.8374 Fax: 650.723.1687 info@hoover.stanford.edu www.hoover.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"IT IS BASED ON OUR FIRM BELIEF THAT WE ARE PART OF THE WORLD WE LIVE IN, AND THAT WE SHARE OUR WORLD'S FORTUNES AS WELL AS MISFORTUNES,

AND THAT OUR NATIONAL INTEREST DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE INTERESTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY."

–The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz

SAUDI ARABIA'S ACCESSION TO THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION on December 11 was the culmination of more than a decade of work and progress by the Kingdom. The achievement represents an important step toward ensuring a prosperous future for all members of the global economy and community.

Accession to the WTO means increased transparency, decreased barriers to trade and strict protection of intellectual property. The Kingdom will be able to promote greater diversification of its economy and create opportunities both at home and abroad.

Saudi Arabia is the world's 13th largest merchandise exporter and 23rd largest importer. Through accession, the Kingdom will work with fellow WTO members to improve international economic cooperation for the betterment of people worldwide.

THE PEOPLE OF SAUDI ARABIA
www.saudiembassy.net

STRONG ALLIES. COMMITTED FRIENDS.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED